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HEBREWS



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THE BIBLE FOR HOME AND SCHOOL

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PROFESSOR OF HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

HEBREWS

EDGAR J. GOODSPEED

THE BIBLE FOR HOME AND SCHOOL

SHAILER MATHEWS, GENERAL EDITOR

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THE BIBLE FOR HOME AND SCHOOL

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

BY

EDGAR J. GOODSPEED

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TO MY BROTHER
CHARLES TEN BROEKE GOODSPEED

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

THE BIBLE FOR HOME AND SCHOOL is intended to place the results of the best modern biblical scholarship at the disposal of the general reader. It does not seek to duplicate other commentaries to which the student must turn. Its chief characteristics are (*a*) its rigid exclusion of all *processes*, both critical and exegetical, from its notes; (*b*) its presupposition and its use of the assured results of historical investigation and criticism wherever such results throw light on the biblical text; (*c*) its running analysis both in text and comment; (*d*) its brief explanatory notes adapted to the rapid reader; (*e*) its thorough but brief Introductions; (*f*) its use of the Revised Version of 1881, supplemented with all important renderings in other versions.

Biblical science has progressed rapidly during the past few years, but the reader still lacks a brief, comprehensive commentary that shall extend to him in usable form material now at the disposition of the student. It is hoped that in this series the needs of intelligent Sunday School teachers have been met, as well as those of clergymen and lay readers, and that in scope, purpose, and loyalty to the Scriptures as a foundation of Christian thought and life, its volumes will stimulate the intelligent use of the Bible in the home and the school.

SHAILER MATHEWS.

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THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

By EDGAR J. GOODSPEED

INTRODUCTION

I. TEXT

THE text of the Epistle to the Hebrews is preserved in practical completeness in three ancient uncial manuscripts: Sinaiticus of the fourth century, Alexandrinus of the fifth, and Claromontanus of the sixth. Three other early uncials contain considerable parts of it: Vaticanus of the fourth century, Ephraemi Rescriptus of the fifth, and the newly discovered Oxyrhynchus papyrus (657), which belongs to the early part of the fourth century, and takes rank with Vaticanus in the antiquity and excellence of its text. Vaticanus preserves the text of Hebrews 1: 1-9: 14; the Oxyrhynchus papyrus contains Heb. 2: 14-5: 5; 10: 8-11: 13; 11: 28-12: 17. The latter thus importantly supplements the ancient and excellent text of Vaticanus. To these must now be added the valuable, though fragmentary manuscript of the Pauline epistles and Hebrews brought to America in 1907 by Charles L. Freer, Esq. This is an uncial, belonging to the fifth or sixth century, and has Hebrews following second Thessalonians, after the manner of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

The textual transmission of Hebrews is further instructive in that it was anciently copied as belonging with the epistles of Paul, standing after the nine longer epistles of Marcion's canon and before the Pastorals and Philemon; or in other words, between Second Thessalonians and First Timothy. The significance of this position given the epistle by its fourth-century copyist will demand consideration in another connection.

Ancient and excellent as the manuscripts attesting the

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text of the epistle are, there remain in the text a few readings of great difficulty, which some commentators are disposed to interpret as primitive errors in transcription, and upon which we can only await further light.

II. CANONICITY

The acceptance of Hebrews as canonical scripture was nearly everywhere contingent upon the admission of its Pauline authorship. Churches which held it to be the work of Paul naturally included it with his letters among their sacred books. Yet without canvassing the problem of its authorship in detail, its gradual rise to a place in the canon of scripture may be outlined.

The first man to undertake to shape a New Testament over against the Old, was the schismatic Marcion of Pontus, A.D. 144. His New Testament, meagre as it was, was yet structurally complete, containing a gospel, that of Luke, on the one hand, and on the other, a group of apostolic epistles, the first ten of the apostle Paul. When the church came, more than a generation later, to construct the New Testament, it did not abandon these fundamental lines, but rather developed them into fulness.

Of this second stage in the development of the canon, the ancient Roman list, called after its discoverer the Muratorian, is, with all its obscurities, perhaps the clearest witness, representing the Roman canon of the last quarter of the second century. It enumerates thirteen letters of Paul, but has no mention of Hebrews, unless it be meant by the "forged epistle to the Alexandrians," which is named only to be repudiated. In the Old Latin version of the New Testament, supposed to have originated about this time, Hebrews seems to have been wanting.

Irenæus' failure to use or mention Hebrews in his work against heresies has often been noted. Eusebius indeed says (*H.E.* 5 : 26) that he used it in a work now lost, but does not state whether he deemed it canonical; while

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Photius quotes Stephen Gobar, of the sixth century, as saying that neither Irenæus nor Hippolytus accepted it as Paul's. Although Bishop of Lyons, Irenæus was in close touch with Rome, and his testimony is seen to accord in time, place, and substance with the Muratorian. At the end of the second century Hebrews was not accepted at Rome as canonical or as a work of Paul. Of its rating in Africa the silence of the Old Latin has given us an important hint, to which the explicit testimony of Tertullian must be added. Tertullian quotes Hebrews and assigns it confidently to Barnabas, expressly distinguishing it from works of apostolic authority, when it would have been very much to his purpose to include it among such. Africa as well as Rome thus omits Hebrews from its canon in the year 200.

This attitude of the Roman and African churches seems to have undergone little alteration in the third century. Gaius of Rome and Cyprian of Carthage do not appear to have included Hebrews among Paul's epistles. Indeed, no Latin writer is known to have accepted Hebrews as Paul's, before Hilary (died 368 A.D.).

This failure on the part of the western church to accept Hebrews as Paul's or as belonging to the canon, is important for two reasons: first, because the New Testament canon pretty certainly originated in the west, that is, at Rome; second, because Hebrews was probably written to Roman Christians, and was certainly known in Rome by 95 A.D., since Clement of Rome is strongly influenced by it. The Roman church thus knew the epistle from the earliest times, but steadily refused to accept it as Paul's, or to admit it into the apostolic canon. It would seem that the Roman church, if any, must have known who wrote the epistle, and the meaning of its attitude will demand explanation under a later topic.

To the position of the Roman church, that of the Alexandrian presents the strongest contrast. Clement of Alexandria held Hebrews to be the work of Paul (*H.E.* 6 : 14),

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and appealed to the authority of the "blessed presbyter," probably meaning Pantænus, as an earlier sponsor for its Pauline authorship and apostolic character. To this opinion Origen somewhat dubiously subscribed (*H.E.* 6 : 25); at all events he constantly quotes Hebrews as Paul's, and once at least professes himself ready to prove it his, although elsewhere he adopts a different tone. The verdict of Alexandria naturally carried great weight. Dionysius, Theognostus, and Peter Martyr maintained it at Alexandria in the third century; Methodius of Tyre probably accepted it; it gradually pervaded the east, and ultimately influenced even the west to accept Hebrews as Pauline, apostolic, and canonical.

We have reached the time of Eusebius, whose situation in Palestine naturally subjected him to Alexandrian influence. He accepts fourteen epistles of Paul, only pausing to note that the Roman church disputes Hebrews as not having been written by Paul. The canon reached its present limits with the festal letter of Athanasius (A.D. 367), in which Hebrews stands triumphant, fortified now by two centuries of distinguished Alexandrian tradition. Jerome's feeble protest, "The custom of the Latins does not receive it among the canonical scriptures as St. Paul's," is the last serious expression of Roman disapproval. Isidore of Seville (died 636), it is true, mentions the doubt felt by many Latin Christians as to its authorship, but probably only echoes the language of Eusebius and Jerome.

The century of Eusebius and Athanasius was that of our earliest manuscripts, and the presence of Hebrews among the letters of Paul in Vaticanus and Sinaiticus clearly shows the position the epistle had gained. If, as Hort somewhat improbably surmised, they were written in Rome about the middle of the fourth century, their inclusion of Hebrews among the letters of Paul is an evidence of the acquiescence of the Roman Christians in the established Alexandrian opinion.

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III. THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE EPISTLE

I. EXTERNAL EVIDENCE AS TO AUTHORSHIP

At Alexandria the opinion prevailed from early times that Paul wrote Hebrews. Clement of Alexandria held this view, and professed to derive it from his teacher, Pantænus. Origen, indeed, expressed some doubt about it, but later Alexandrians held to its Pauline authorship, and eventually influenced the whole eastern church to accept it. At Rome, where the epistle is first quoted (Clement of Rome), and to which it was probably written, there is very little testimony as to its author. The Pauline authorship claimed for the epistle by the Alexandrians found little favor there. Novatian, a father of the third century, quotes Heb. 13 : 15 as from the most holy Barnabas, but this opinion is otherwise unattested at Rome. Jerome, indeed, knew of it, but preferred the Alexandrian view that Paul was its author, although he was by no means certain of its truth. At Carthage, Tertullian quotes Hebrews as a work of Barnabas (*De Pudicitia*, 20). Cyprian and other early North African witnesses agree in not referring Hebrews to Paul, although they are silent about Barnabas. Augustine, on the other hand, includes it among Paul's letters, and the Council of Hippo, at which he was present (A.D. 393), acknowledged it as Paul's. By this time the Alexandrian opinion, long since prevalent in the east, had begun to influence the west as well, as Augustine declares.

The ancient testimony of Christian writers as to the authorship of Hebrews is thus inconsistent and the testimony of the epistle itself takes on added importance.

2. INTERNAL EVIDENCE AS TO AUTHORSHIP

A. *Direct.* The letter does not name its author in an opening salutation, as most ancient letters do, nor does his name appear in the course of the letter, as Paul's some-

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times does (1 Thess. 2 : 18; 2 Thess. 3 : 17, etc.). We are thus thrown back upon the indirect evidence afforded by the epistle, for the means to criticise the ancient testimonies, and if possible reach a conclusion.

B. *Indirect.* Upon examination, the epistle itself yields a considerable mass of evidence, bearing upon its author. The writer speaks as a Jew, — the fathers, the prophets, angels (1 : 1-4); Moses, the elders (11 : 2). He makes free and confident use of the Jewish scriptures, quoting from them about one hundred times, and using them in the Septuagint form of text and canon. He refers to the Psalms as "David" (4 : 7), and like Paul, shares the Jewish belief that the old covenant was communicated to men through angels (2 : 2. Cf. Gal. 3 : 19).

He does not, indeed, argue in the style of rabbinic Judaism, but rather after the manner of academic, philosophic Judaism; at some points resembling Philo, though never going to such lengths as he in the allegorizing of the Old Testament. Thus the tabernacle and its service are a copy and shadow of heavenly realities (8 : 5; 9 : 23); Melchizedek possesses an ulterior significance (7 : 1-3), etc.

His knowledge of Judaism does not always seem to be accurate, for he once speaks as though the high-priest had daily to offer sacrifices for his own and the people's sins (7 : 27; but cf. 9 : 7 and 25, where a different representation appears). Further, he places the altar of incense within the Most Holy Place (9 : 4).

He is plainly a Christian Jew, as every page of his epistle shows. His Christianity is not of the Judaistic type, however, for he regards Judaism as but the shadow and copy of the heavenly realities actualized in Christ (9 : 23; 10 : 9). He shares Paul's conception of the futility of the Law, but finds beauty and value in it, as prefiguring, however imperfectly, the new and better covenant (10 : 1). He resembles Philo also in that his interest is never in a concrete, actual, contemporary temple, service, and priesthood, but

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only in the ideal, statutory Judaism of the tabernacle and the wilderness.

He is a master of Greek style, finished, periodic, and antithetical, standing conspicuous among New Testament writers in this regard. In the wealth and weight of his theological vocabulary, he seems a fully trained exponent of the Jewish Alexandrian school. Like his readers, he is not of those who heard the Lord teach on earth, but has received the message of salvation through such persons (2:3).

He shows acquaintance with the epistles of Paul, or at least with Paul's teaching (2:8, 9), with some elements of which he is in essential sympathy. He is no mere Paulinist however, but a Christian thinker of originality and distinction, exhibiting a type of Christian thought comparable in individuality with the Pauline, the Synoptic, and the Johannine.

He speaks with authority and severity to his readers (5:11), with whose virtues and shortcomings he is thoroughly acquainted (6:10). He knows the persecution through which they have passed (10:32, 35-39), as well as their present perilous position. He hopes to be speedily reunited with them; that is, at Rome (13:19). He knows Timothy, and reports his release from prison, announcing his purpose to join him and them. He is apparently outside of Italy when he writes the letter (13:24).

3. MODERN OPINION

Luther proposed Apollos as the person in the early church most likely to have written Hebrews, and some scholars of ability (Bleek, Tholuck, Alford, Kurtz, Farrar) have accepted his view. Paul has been the chief claimant put forward in modern as in ancient times, but it is doubtful whether any scholar of weight at present assigns the epistle to him. Ullmann, Wieseler, Renan, Ritschl, Weiss, and McGiffert incline to Barnabas. Luke has been urged by

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some (Delitzsch), and Mark by others (Lowndes), despite the contrast presented by the style and substance of their acknowledged works. Harnack has recently proposed *Prisca*, or *Prisca and Aquila*, presenting a strong array of considerations. Many scholars pronounce the problem insoluble, taking refuge in the dictum of Origen, "Who indeed wrote the epistle God knows."

4. CONCLUSION

If we now seek to test the ancient opinions as to the authorship of *Hebrews* by the internal evidence of the epistle, the claim of Paul has first to be considered. For this may be urged, first, the testimony of Pantænus, Clement, and later Alexandrians, ultimately accepted by the whole church, eastern and western. Against it stands the silence of the Roman church for more than two centuries, broken only by Novatian's mention of Barnabas. Tested by the internal evidence of the epistle, the Pauline authorship is negatived by the un-Pauline anonymity of the epistle, though this may be an accident; it is condemned by the dissimilarity to Paul's vocabulary, style, theology, and method of reasoning, and by the statement, so unlike Paul, that the writer received the truth from those who heard the Lord speak.

Clement's theory that *Hebrews* is a translation, by Luke or Clement of Rome, of a Hebrew original by Paul, is condemned by the unlikeness of the thought and argumentation to Paul's, and of the style to Clement's or Luke's; still further by the impossibility of explaining in a version the extraordinary rhetorical finish and vigor of *Hebrews*, the markedly, even vitally, Septuagint character of its quotations from the Old Testament, and the nicety of its theological terminology, which could hardly be translated into Hebrew or Aramaic, much less have originated in one of those tongues and survived translation out of it. Altogether it would be difficult to name a New Testament

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book less likely to represent translation from a Hebrew original than Hebrews.

The statement of Tertullian connecting the epistle with Barnabas has little ancient support indeed, but cannot at once be decisively set aside. We have no genuine writings of Joseph called Barnabas with which to compare it, although a so-called Epistle of Barnabas and a Gospel of Barnabas are extant, the former an Alexandrian monument of the second century, the latter a mediæval (13th century) or modern (16th century) work of Mohammedan color. An ancient Gospel of Barnabas, now lost, is named in the "Decree of Gelasius" and in the Sixty Canonical Books (Codex Baroccianus). Mention may be made, further, of the Acts of Barnabas, by Mark, a work of the fourth or fifth century. A small but fairly complete cycle of literature — gospel, acts, epistle — thus gathered early about the name of Barnabas, but unfortunately all of it that has come down to us is clearly spurious, and thus supplies no valid criterion by which to test his claim to the authorship of Hebrews.

We can therefore bring against the ascription of Hebrews to Barnabas no such definite arguments from style, theology, and method, as are abundantly supplied in the case of Paul by a comparison of Hebrews with his acknowledged works, but the narrative of Acts and the letters of Paul contain statements as to Barnabas which afford some basis of comparison with the internal evidence of the epistle.

These references form a picture of an eloquent Jewish Christian evangelist of Levitical ancestry, a man of means and probably education, the first friend and co-worker of Paul. The Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions* contain frequent references to Barnabas as in Rome and Alexandria, and more than one consideration points to the west as the probable field of his missionary labor after his separation from Paul, with whom he evidently had an understanding as to the direction in which each should

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work. There are thus no general considerations of weight to be set against the statement of Tertullian and Novatian.

If we seek to test that statement further by the internal evidence of the epistle, certain objections to it at once appear.

A. The author is not one of those who heard the Lord speak, but of those to whom the word had been confirmed by those who had (2 : 3). But Barnabas is said by Clement of Alexandria (*Stromateis*, 2 : 20) to have been one of the Seventy, and in this he is followed by Eusebius (*H.E.* 1 : 12 : 1, probably following Clement, *Hypotyposes*, 7; cf. *H.E.* 2 : 1 : 4). Clement's inaccuracy in these matters is well recognized, however, as in his identification of James the Lord's brother with James the son of Alphæus (Clement, *Hypotyposes*, 7, quoted in *H.E.* 2 : 1 : 4), and his statement is by no means decisive. Still it must be reckoned with, and may be noted as one of the specific notices making against the Barnabas authorship.

B. The writer is too ignorant of the temple arrangements to have been a Levite long resident at Jerusalem, for he represents the high-priest as daily offering sacrifice for his own sins and those of the people (7 : 27), and places the incense-altar in the Most Holy Place, 9 : 4, contrary to Exodus 30 : 1, 3, 6, and Josephus, *Antiquities*, 3 : 6 : 8 (cf. Luke 1 : 11), which locate it definitely in the Holy Place, outside the veil.

It may be answered that the writer is not at all concerned with the temple in Jerusalem, but with the tabernacle in the wilderness. His sources of information as to it were the books of the Pentateuch, notably Exodus. Residence in Jerusalem and familiarity with the temple-precincts have at best but a secondary bearing upon the matter. Philo's words, "The most fragrant of all incenses are offered up twice every day in the fire, being burnt within the veil, both when the sun rises and sets, before the morning and after the evening sacrifice,"¹ might be understood to locate the incense-altar in the Most Holy Place, and

¹ Philo, *On Animals fit for Sacrifice*, ch. 2.

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the command to put of the incense "before the testimony in the tent of meeting, where I will meet with thee" (Ex. 30 : 36), may have contributed to this confusion. As to the high-priest's service, there is even less difficulty, for the writer expresses himself definitely and accurately about the matter in 9 : 7, where he says that into the second tabernacle the high-priest alone goes, once in the year, not without blood, which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people. This language shows that the writer is under no misconception as to the frequency of the high-priest's service, and it is artificial to ignore this passage and insist, upon the basis of 7 : 27, that the writer did not know things which as a matter of fact he specifically and unequivocally asserts in 9 : 7. These points have no bearing upon the residence of the writer of Hebrews in Jerusalem or upon his Levitical descent.

On the other hand, there are points in which Barnabas admirably satisfies the conditions of the problem. He was a Jewish Christian, a man of substance and so probably of education, the broadest Christian in the church at the time of Paul's conversion, and a man of such zeal and eloquence as to be called by the apostles the Son of Exhortation. No other figure in early Christian history more naturally combines liability to Alexandrian influence with wide-ranging evangelism. An associate of Paul, and thus conversant and sympathetic with his thought, he was yet not a disciple of Paul, but a Christian teacher of independent views. Paul's influence he had felt, and with some at least of his letters he must have been familiar. Timothy he would have known in early days at Derbe and Lystra, and perhaps also in later times at Rome, if, as seems probable, Barnabas found his way thither with Mark. The writer's interest in Levi and the Levitical sits well on Barnabas the Levite. The only individual mention of the patriarch Levi in the New Testament is found in Hebrews,¹ and the word Levitical occurs in no

¹ Heb. 7 : 5, 9; cf. Rev. 7 : 7.

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other New Testament book. The writer's point of view indeed is distinctly Levitic.¹

The existence in the early church of a cycle of works bearing the name of Barnabas (gospel, acts, epistle), strongly suggests that he did write something, the tradition of which occasioned the ascription of other writings to him, precisely as happened in the case of Peter, Clement, and others. More particularly, the spurious Epistle of Barnabas first appears under that name at Alexandria, the very place where Hebrews is first ascribed to Paul, — facts which at once demand to be related. They suggest that when Hebrews was given to Paul by the Alexandrians, in the obvious desire to make it apostolic, the tradition lingered that Barnabas had written an epistle, and this tradition came at length to be connected with the anonymous work since known as the Epistle of Barnabas. On the whole, in spite of the dogmatic negation of some critics, there is more to be said for Barnabas than for any one else,¹ and the only serious ancient testimony on the matter, that of Tertullian and Novatian, is surely not to be swept aside without substantial reason. Such a reason may exist in the apparent lateness of the epistle, but no other valid consideration of weight has been adduced.

The silence of the epistle as to its author has been thought by some significant, even intentional, but this can hardly be true, since the writer's allusions to his intended visit to them and to his prospective meeting with Timothy, show clearly that the epistle was not originally anonymous. It is altogether more probable that the salutation was early lost from the beginning of the epistle, either through chance mutilation common in ancient documents, or through the quite intelligible feeling that the epistle began more loftily and worthily without the commonplace names and greetings, which might seem even to disfigure the majestic introduction. The loss of the salutatory title (*e.g.* Barnabas to the Romans, etc.) might be the easier, if, on the one hand,

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the church already possessed an apostolic letter to the Romans, and, on the other, the fame of Barnabas suffered as time went on and the Acts and the letters of Paul gained in influence. These, it will be recalled, leave him under what have seemed to many serious imputations of vacillation (Gal. 2 : 13), and defection from Paul (Acts 15 : 39). As such a view of Barnabas came to prevail, his connection with an epistle like Hebrews might very naturally be suffered to fall into oblivion.

The silence of Rome as to the writer of the epistle is satisfied by the same consideration, quite as naturally as by the view of Harnack that Prisca was the author, but was quietly lost sight of, as the church disliked to own a woman among its greatest teachers.

We cannot indeed establish the authorship of Hebrews by Barnabas, nor is the view free from grave difficulties, especially since the epistle falls so late in the first century, when Barnabas must have been a very old man. Yet there is, as McGiffert puts it, more to be said for Barnabas than for any other claimant to the authorship.

IV. THE PERSONS ADDRESSED IN THE EPISTLE

Since the time of Pantænus and Irenæus, *i.e.* the latter part of the second century, the designation *To Hebrews* seems to have been generally attached to the epistle. In this title fathers and manuscripts unanimously agree. The epistle itself says nothing directly about its recipients, the apparent loss of its title having deprived us of the express statement of its destination which presumably accompanied its opening salutation. Yet there are not a few indirect touches in the epistle which throw light upon the circle for which it was written.

The intended readers are clearly Christian believers of long standing and genuine worth. They are firmly attached to the Old Testament, which they probably know in the Septuagint version, since it is to that that the writer

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constantly, regularly, and unmistakably appeals. This evident acceptance of the Old Testament at once suggests Jewish Christian readers. Yet it by no means establishes the fact that the epistle was written to such persons, since Gentile Christians were from the first little if at all behind Jewish believers in loyalty to scripture, and to Gentile readers the peculiar use of the Old Testament made by our writer would have been admirably suited. So zealously, indeed, did the Gentile believers appropriate the Septuagint Old Testament that the Jews conceived a distaste for their own book, and in the second century practically resigned it to their antagonists and had recourse to a new translation. Nor is evidence wanting that in the first century Gentile believers were familiar with the Old Testament and amenable to its authority. Clement of Rome in writing to the Corinthians, soon after the writing of Hebrews, a Gentile Christian writing to Gentile Christians, makes even larger use of the Greek Old Testament than does the writer of the epistle.

The readers of the epistle, like the writer, are not of those who heard the Lord speak, but have received the word from others who had (2:3; 4:2). This implies remoteness of time or place, or both, from the personal activity of Jesus in Palestine. That a considerable time has elapsed is further evident from the allusions to the death of former leaders of the congregation, and to the length of the Christian experience which lies behind the readers. Their church has been long established.

The readers are nevertheless taxed with dulness and immaturity (5:11 ff.). They ought to be teachers, but are themselves in need of instruction, and that of the simpler sort. Yet they are not without commendable traits, for in its infancy their church heroically withstood persecution (10:32-35), and they have never been backward in ministering to the saints, and sharing their burdens (6:9-12). A new persecution is now threatening (10:36, 39; 12:4), if not actually afflicting them, against which the writer is in

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part seeking to fortify them. The danger of apostasy and the admonition to be steadfast color the whole epistle.

If persecution is attacking the congregation on the one hand, apathy and indifference are threatening it on the other. Nor is it easy to recognize in this peril a tendency to lapse into the Judaism of temple and ceremonial, or even of scribe and synagogue. It is rather the disposition of men whose hopes have long been deferred, to turn from the living God, and sink back into their former heathenism (3 : 12). To such men the writer would show the grandeur and worth of Christian faith, the meaning of the life and death of Christ, the significance of the discipline of suffering, and the necessity of laying firm hold on that unseen world which alone has abiding reality.

The personal references in the epistle are few but significant. The writer has been among the readers, and purposes to return to them at the earliest opportunity (13 : 19). They know Timothy (13 : 23), and seem to have an interest in him, as only Gentile or even Pauline congregations are likely to have had. They of Italy, or rather from Italy, send greetings to them (13 : 24), which seems most naturally to mean that Italian Christians, for some reason out of Italy at the time, wish to be remembered to a congregation in Italy.

If we now undertake to combine these touches into the likeness of some Christian community of the first century, we must acknowledge that the Jerusalem church is certainly not the one addressed. The commendations and the condemnations of the epistle alike fail to accord with what we know of the Jerusalem church in any period of its brief existence. Nor is it essentially easier to connect the epistle with some other Palestinian congregation, such as that at Pella or Jamnia. Indeed, contemporary ceremonial Judaism, with its temple and priests, is utterly absent from the mind of the writer, whose Judaism is not personal or legalistic, but academic and philosophical. The failure to take account of this is probably responsible

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for that ancient opinion as to the epistle which gave it its present title, as well as for not a few modern efforts to connect it with Palestinian or other Jewish congregations.

For the Alexandrian church more may perhaps be said, since the community that had produced the Septuagint might with propriety be addressed in the most finished Greek, and hear the Old Testament quoted in the Alexandrian version. Here, too, the title *To Hebrews* appears most at home, if we are to judge by the analogy of the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, and here the title very probably originated. The Alexandrianism of the epistle, too, is readily understood in an epistle addressed by one Alexandrian Christian to others. Yet the clear references to persecution, and the inexorable allusions to Italy and Timothy, condemn this identification like the others, and recall us to Italy and to the church at Rome.

The Italian destination of the epistle has of late been widely accepted, but it has assumed many forms. It has been held that the epistle is addressed to all the Christian congregations of Italy, as a sort of circular letter (Von Soden). Again, it is maintained that so far from being addressed to all the churches of Italy, it is not written even to one of them, but to a part of it, — a little house-congregation within the Roman church (Harnack, Zahn). For neither of these positions does there seem to be adequate evidence. All the hints of the epistle, however, seem to converge upon the Roman church as that to which it was addressed. The references to persecution long past (Nero) and now present (Domitian), to hospitality and liberality to the saints, to former heroic leaders, to evangelization by those who had heard the Lord, to Italy and Timothy, fall in with the Roman destination of the epistle in a way that leaves little to be desired. The earliest trace of the epistle in literature is in I Clement. That letter, written from Rome during Domitian's persecution, and thus probably soon after Hebrews, is full of the influence of

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Hebrews, and thus contributes strongly to confirm the Roman destination of the epistle.

We cannot indeed establish the Roman destination of Hebrews, but we may say with confidence that as far as our knowledge goes, the indirect testimony of the epistle as to its intended readers fits better upon the Roman church than upon any other ancient church of which we have knowledge.

V. OCCASION AND PURPOSE

The writer's repeated injunctions to his readers to hold fast throws light upon the purpose of the epistle and indirectly upon the occasion which prompted it. They are to hold fast their boldness (3 : 6), and the glorying of their hope, firm unto the end ; their first confidence (3 : 14), firm unto the end ; their confession (4 : 14) ; the confession of their hope, that it waver not (10 : 23). They are warned against falling short of the promised "rest" of God (4 : 1), and urged to give diligence to enter into that rest (4 : 11). They are to run with endurance the race set before them (12 : 1), and not to grow weary and faint in their souls (12 : 3). They must not refuse him who speaks (12 : 25), for there is no escape for those who reject the heavenly warning. They are to beware of falling away from the living God (3 : 12).

The readers of the epistle are evidently in danger of giving up their Christian faith, which some of them have held for a long time. Indeed, there are already about them lapsed persons, who have thus fallen away (6 : 6), who cannot be renewed again unto repentance. The writer is persuaded better things of his readers. For the apostates, however, he reserves his most terrible indictment. There remains for them only a certain fearful expectation of judgment (10 : 27), for they have trodden under foot the Son of God, and done despite to the spirit of grace (10 : 29). The terrible and feeling denunciation of these persons in chapters 6 and 10 makes it clear that

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this is no imaginary class, but a real and present element of the immediate situation, the existence and possible growth of which the writer counts a most serious peril to the church. The writer would hardly present to them with such vividness, and twice in the epistle, the awful consequences of apostasy, unless there were danger that some of them should fall into the same deadly sin. The atmosphere of impending persecution, already detected, is here evident, and with it an important element in the situation that evoked the epistle.

The peril of apostasy under the stress of persecution is not all that threatens the congregation. Some of its members are Christians of some years' standing, old enough to be teachers, but actually immature (5 : 12). These persons need to be aroused to press on unto perfection (6 : 1). The readers have indeed shown Christian graces in practical ways, ministering to the saints and the like; it would seem to be in other matters that their failure lies (6 : 10). The fact seems to be that the writer is apprehensive that his readers, or some of them, will fall into indifference as to Christian faith, not because of stress of persecution, but through the lapse of time, and the wearing out of their first enthusiasm. A sense of disappointment at the failure of the promises to reach fulfilment, too, is reflected in the writer's picture of the old worthies, who died in faith, without having received the promises (11 : 1, 13, 39). The peril of indifference would grow more and more serious as time went on and the last individuals of Jesus' own generation disappeared, without his coming again in the glorious manner so keenly anticipated through the first years of the life of the church. For these and other reasons, sluggishness and indifference were creeping into the church, and a stirring declaration of the folly and the peril of such decline was urgently demanded.

The purpose of Hebrews was thus above all things a practical purpose. The cold and indifferent among those to whom this Christian leader writes, must be shamed and startled out of their torpor and neglect, and roused to a

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new consciousness of the transcendent worth of that which they still possessed, but were likely to lose. This, and not their theological instruction, or adjustment to the downfall of Judaism, is the idea which dominates every part of the letter, and it is this that explains the fact that admonition and practical exhortation are so constantly interwoven with teaching in the epistle. Hebrews is thus to be understood not as a treatise upon the relation of Christianity to Judaism, or upon the supreme worth of Christianity, but as an impassioned oration, wholly centred upon recalling to steadfast devotion to Christ weary and wavering disciples.

With the practical the writer skilfully combines the apologetic. In his effort to secure his readers in their Christian faith, he enters upon a spirited and original defence of Christianity, which he approaches from the point of view of philosophical Judaism. It is plain that if the readers can be convinced of the truth of the writer's claims for Christianity, his practical purpose will be attained, and their steadfastness will be assured. But from his apologetic the writer again and again returns to his exhortation, in which the great motive of the epistle finds most direct expression. The writer well describes it as a "Word of Exhortation," a hortatory discourse (13 : 22).

VI. DATE AND PLACE OF COMPOSITION

I. DATE

The unquestionable use of the epistle in Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, A.D. 95, supplies the latest possible date, and places the writing of Hebrews in the first century. The allusion (13 : 7) to the glorious end met by the former leaders shows that at least a generation has passed since the founding of the Christian church,¹ and strongly suggests the Neronian persecution. Yet it has

¹ Cf. 2 : 3 and 5 : 12.

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been held by Harnack that the expulsion of the Jews in the time of Claudius, in which of course the Christians then in Rome were involved, better satisfies the writer's references to a great conflict of sufferings in the former days (10 : 32 ff.), since the words "after you were enlightened" (10 : 32) show that the persecution ensued almost immediately upon the founding of the church, or at least fell in the early days of its history. It is true that the words of Suetonius, "The Jews who were constantly rioting under the instigation of Chrestus, he drove from Rome" (*Judaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit*) (*Claudius* 25; cf. Acts 18 : 2), imply that Christians were involved in that expulsion; but no such persecution can be recognized here as is reflected in 10 : 32-34 and 13 : 7. Moreover, Dion Cassius expressly says that Claudius did not expel the Jews, but prohibited their assemblies (*Hist.* 60 : 6). These three notices practically exhaust our ancient testimony to this edict of Claudius, and they hardly seem to accord with the strong language used in Hebrews with reference to the conflict of former days.

On the other hand, these allusions to former persecution are in every way fully satisfied by the Neronian persecution attested by Tacitus (*Annals* 15 : 44), and reflected in Clement of Rome (chh. 5, 6¹). The Neronian persecution of A.D. 64 is thus the earlier limit, before which the letter cannot have been written.²

Between these dates, A.D. 64 and A.D. 95, all agree that the writing of Hebrews must fall. Those who hold the purpose of the letter to have to do with the prospective destruction of Jerusalem, and the interpretation of that event for Christian Jews, place the composition of it in the time of the Jewish war, A.D. 66-70.

Bleek observed the coincidence of this date with the reference to forty years (3 : 17), which, if reckoned from the

¹ Cf. also Dionysius of Corinth, in Eusebius *H.E.* 2 : 25 : 8.

² The possible influence of Rom. 12 : 19 upon the form in which Deut. 32 : 35 is quoted in Heb. 10 : 30 while not essential to this position, is wholly consistent with it.

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death of Jesus, would bring us to A.D. 68 or 69, but this somewhat fanciful corroborative has had little weight with more recent scholars. The chief objection to this dating of the letter lies in the evident remoteness of the Neronian persecution, which lies now so far in the past as to belong to the former days, and even to the infancy of the church, — “after you were enlightened” (10:32). Those who maintain the early date of the epistle, however, hold to the Jerusalem destination of it, and for them the matter of the Neronian persecution has no connection with Hebrews. But the impossibility of maintaining the Jerusalem destination has already been shown.

If the remoteness of the Neronian persecution brings the date of Hebrews down to a time later than the fall of Jerusalem, however, the silence of the letter as to the latter occurrence shows that it too lay well in the past, and brings the date down still further. For it needs no argument to show that had that momentous event been of recent occurrence, some hint of it would almost certainly have shown itself in the letter. This reticence shows that that catastrophe with all that attended it is no longer fresh in men’s minds, and thus the lapse of some years, perhaps a decade, is implied.¹ The probable date of the letter is thus carried into the times of Titus or Domitian.

In the discussion of the destination of Hebrews it has been shown that an atmosphere of persecution, prospective or actually present, pervades the letter. The existence of apostates, the stirring appeal to heroic behavior in former persecution, the reference to the noble example set by early leaders in the issue of their life, the imprisonment of Timothy (13:23) and others (13:3), the discussion of chastening (12:5-13), especially the verse that introduces it (12:4), — all these unite to show that persecution is hovering over the congregation addressed. For such a condition in the time of Domitian there is abundant evidence in the pages of Clement of Rome, Melito, Tertullian,

¹ Cf. the use of Mount Zion in a Christian sense, 12:22.

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Lactantius, Eusebius, and later writers.¹ Indeed, at no time in the first century, after Nero's persecution, can the situation implied in the letter be so well satisfied as in the "sudden and repeated calamities and reverses," with which the cruelty and caprice of Domitian visited the Roman church. There is therefore every probability that Hebrews was written in the time of Domitian, A.D. 81-96.

It is not easy to determine the date of the epistle more precisely. The Timothy of 13: 23 is probably the disciple of Paul, and the fact that he is still living and apparently active fits well with this period, but does not help to anything more specific. Nicephorus states that he suffered martyrdom in the time of Domitian (*H.E.* 3: 11), and this notice, in so far as it has any worth, accords well with the date assigned to the letter, since it at least implies that Timothy lived until the times of Domitian. In the hints of persecution already noted there is, however, ground for placing the date of the letter late in Domitian's reign, for his early years seem to have been comparatively free from excesses and atrocities, which broke out after the revolt of Antoninus Saturninus in A.D. 88. His cruel treatment of his niece Flavia Domitilla and his cousin T. Flavius Clemens, generally believed to have been Christians, belongs to the close of his reign. The exaction of the Jewish temple tax for the Capitoline Jupiter, or the *fiscus*, which was so harshly carried out as to be practically a persecution, seems likewise to belong to this late time. A passage in the epitome of Dion Cassius (*Hist.* 67: 14) is of importance here. "Against both of them (Clemens and Domitilla) a charge of atheism was brought, under which many others also who were perverts to the practices of the Jews were condemned. Of these some were put to death and others had their property confiscated at the very least."² The fact that Domitian's outbreaks against Jews, Christians, and noble Romans belong for the most part to his last years

¹ Collected in Lightfoot, *S. Clement of Rome*, I, pp. 104-115.

² Cf. Heb. 10: 32-34.

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makes it rather probable that Hebrews was written toward the close of his reign. If it be true that the Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians was in some degree called forth by Hebrews, Hebrews must have been written shortly before I Clement, and this date late in Domitian's reign is rendered still more probable.

2. PLACE

In the matter of the place of the letter's composition a definite result is even more difficult to obtain. The words "they of Italy salute you" (13: 24) point away from Italy, but in what direction we can only conjecture. Were the writer a prisoner, as Timothy has lately been, and as 13: 18, 19, possibly suggest, we might think of Sardinia, to the quarries of which persons were often sent from Rome. But it is by no means certain that the writer has been a prisoner, and were he an exile in the Sardinian quarries, his prospect of being speedily restored to his readers (13: 23) must have been small indeed. The reference to Timothy would be helpful, if we knew where Timothy had been imprisoned, for the thought seems to be that Timothy on his way to Rome will join the writer and they will proceed to the city together. It is indeed possible that his meaning is simply that he will meet Timothy when he meets his readers, in Rome, provided Timothy arrives there before the writer has left the city again; but this seems altogether less natural, and the fact that the writer has news of Timothy which he transmits to his readers, shows that he writes from a point lying between Timothy and them. Eusebius¹ and Nicephorus² state that Timothy was the first bishop of Ephesus, a tradition evidently resting on notices in the pastoral epistles (1 Tim. 1: 3, etc.). Yet it is not improbable that Timothy continued his oversight of the church at Ephesus, or at least was active in that region, after the death of Paul. Further, while the persecution experienced

¹ *H.E.* 3: 4: 6.

² Nicephorus, *H.E.* 3: 11.

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by the Roman Christians in the time of Domitian does not appear to have been a general, worldwide movement, there is evidence that it made itself felt in Asia, since Eusebius makes it responsible for the banishment of the apostle John to Patmos.¹ It is easy to suppose that the imprisonment of Timothy mentioned in 13 : 23 was a part of the same movement, and that upon his release he found himself at Ephesus or in its vicinity. There is at least nothing improbable in this, and it points to some place lying between Ephesus and Rome as that at which Hebrews was written. Philippi and Corinth were such points, and it is altogether possible that at one of these the letter was written. Yet in all this we have only probabilities, and sometimes precarious ones, on which to build.

The Alexandrianism so characteristic of the epistle has suggested to some that Alexandria was its place of origin. It is true that the writer's Judaism is of that impersonal and scholastic type so closely associated with Alexandria, and this fact must not be lost from view. Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that type of Judaism confined, in the first century, to the city of its origin. Evidence is not wanting that the whole eastern world had felt its influence. Moreover, the references to Italy and Timothy, in chapter 13, while very difficult of interpretation, are least of all compatible with an Alexandrian origin for the epistle.

When Paul wrote his letter to the Romans from Corinth, he seems to have appended to it a long list of greetings to Christians at Rome, including not a few salutations from friends of theirs at Corinth, some of them no doubt persons who had formerly been at Rome. While these verses in Romans are not free from critical suspicion, they present a suggestive parallel to the words "they of Italy salute you," and remind us that in Corinth especially, Roman Christians were at all times likely to be found.

¹ *H.E.* 3: 18: 1.

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VII. STYLE AND LANGUAGE

In contrast with the nervous, rapid, intense, and often impetuous style of Paul, that of the writer to the Hebrews exhibits the utmost rhetorical restraint and poise. At the same time, it is by no means wanting in trenchant and incisive vigor, and possesses peculiar accuracy and precision. Beyond that of other New Testament writings the language of Hebrews exhibits finish, dignity, and elevation; to a degree indeed that some have thought inconsistent with a personal or practical character. The Greek in which it is written is more literary than is that of any other New Testament book. The vocabulary is notably large. It is not that of everyday speech, but rather of a school of theological thought. The classical and Septuagint elements in it are very considerable. The style betrays no less art. The sentences are periodic and fitly proportioned, sometimes exhibiting, as Blass has pointed out, the Asian rhythms characteristic of prose writers of the Common Dialect.

In proportion to its length Hebrews shows more abundant use of the Old Testament than any other New Testament book except the Apocalypse, which surpasses it in the number of its literary reminiscences, but not in the bulk of its Old Testament material. In using it the writer adheres steadily to the Septuagint; the possible exceptions are Heb. 10 : 30, where Deut. 32 : 35 is quoted in precisely the form of Rom. 12 : 19; and Heb. 12 : 12, where the Hebrew of Isaiah 35 : 3 seems to have influenced him. Not only the text of the Septuagint, but its canon is reflected in the epistle; *e.g.* in chapter 11, where Maccabæan heroes are included side by side with prophets and martyrs of the earlier time.

The writer's manner of introducing his quotations from the Old Testament is worthy of note. The phrase "It is written," frequent in the Synoptics and the letters of Paul,

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and to some extent in John, Acts, and 1 Peter, does not appear in Hebrews.¹ Still less does the writer refer his quotations to their sources, as Matthew and Paul often do. Our only parallel to these in Hebrews is the expression "saying in David," 4 : 7. Yet his method is not usually that of tacit reminiscence, like that of the Apocalypticist;² for he has an introductory phrase for most of his quotations. This is usually the colorless "He saith" or "He said," and, as the subject is unexpressed, it is in each case a question what subject is to be supplied in thought. Sometimes, certainly, a human speaker is contemplated (2 : 6; 7 : 21). In other instances, Christ is the speaker (2 : 12; 10 : 5); in others, the Holy Spirit (3 : 7; 10 : 15). In most instances of express quotation, however, God appears as the speaker (1 : 5, 13; 4 : 3; 5 : 5, 6; 7 : 17; 8 : 5, 8). Not that the writer assumes God as the speaker of everything said in the Old Testament, without distinction. On the other hand, in most cases where he represents God as speaking, he is following the example of the prophet or psalmist from whom the words are drawn. Yet such instances as 1 : 6, 8 give color to the opinion that the writer conceives God as the speaker in all revelation; indeed, in the first chapter not a little of his argument seems to depend upon this position.

In all this we miss the explicit scriptural conception and treatment of the Old Testament so characteristic of the Synoptic gospels and of Paul, with their oft-repeated "It is written," and in this important and undeniable trait of the epistle we seem to recognize something not indeed non-Jewish, but at all events non-Palestinian.

In conclusion, the precision of these quotations must be mentioned. The writer is on the whole, and so far as we can judge, with the imperfect Septuagint texts at our command, singularly faithful to his authorities. This is at once evident if an extended passage such as 8 : 8-12 be compared with its source in the Septuagint of Jeremiah

¹ Heb. 10 : 7 is only an apparent exception.

² Rev. 15 : 3 is only an apparent exception.

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31 : 31-34. Slight differences of course appear, but hardly more than now exist between one manuscript of the Septuagint and another. Indeed, it is not too much to say that in this matter of the precision of his Old Testament quotations, and his practically uniform adherence to a single text, the Septuagint, the writer to the Hebrews yields to no other New Testament writer. In this almost scholarly habit of his is reflected again that quality of precision and exactness which so strongly characterized his expression and his thought.

VIII. ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE

It is altogether probable that an address and salutation originally stood at the beginning of Hebrews, and how it came to disappear, whether by accident or design, can only be conjectured. The letter begins immediately with a statement of its theme, the completeness and finality of the revelation in the Son (1 : 1-4). While the letter is peculiarly difficult to analyze, since instruction and exhortation are so interwoven through its whole course, its main outlines may be sketched as follows:

I. Christ, the mediator of the new revelation, superior to all other mediators (angels, Moses), supreme in the universe, and the fulfiller of man's destiny of universal dominion, 1 : 1-2 : 18.

1. The Son is shown from scripture to be superior to angels, 1 : 1-14.

2. The consequent peril of rejecting the salvation offered by the Son, 2 : 1-4.

3. Man's promised world-dominion realized in Christ, through his experience of suffering, 2 : 5-18.

II. Christ the Son greater than Moses the Servant, and his Rest superior to that ushered in by Joshua, 3 : 1-4 : 13.

1. Christ and Moses, 3 : 1-6.

2. Warning against apostasy and unbelief, and consequent failure to attain the Rest of God, 3 : 7-4 : 13.

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III. Christ above Aaron and all earthly high priests, the final, eternal, sinless, oath-attested high priest, after the order of Melchizedek, 4 : 14-7 : 28.

1. Exhortation (serving as transition and introduction), to hold fast, and to approach God with boldness, conscious of the presence with him of a sympathetic and potent high priest, 4 : 14-16.

2. Christ a true high priest by his divine appointment and his human experience, 5 : 1-10.

3. Complaint and rebuke of the readers' backwardness, coupled with warning and encouragement, 5 : 11-6 : 20.

4. The Melchizedek priesthood of Jesus, 7 : 1-28.

IV. Christ's high priestly service, carrying with it the new covenant, is infinitely better than theirs (which was but the shadow), in its heavenly sanctuary, its sacrifice of himself, and its eternal efficacy, 8 : 1-10 : 39.

1. The new priesthood implies the new and better covenant, 8 : 1-13.

2. The better sanctuary, sacrifice, and ministry, 9 : 1-28.

3. The final and eternal efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, 10 : 1-18.

4. Exhortation to draw near and hold fast, reënforced by solemn warnings against apostasy, and reminders of former heroic days, 10 : 19-39.

V. The character of faith, as the faculty of laying firm hold on the unseen realities, exemplified in all the heroes of faith, and preëminently in Jesus, set forth with especial reference to the trials of the readers, which are the discipline of their faith, not its disappointment, 11 : 1-12 : 29.

1. Faith the power through which those of old wrought their achievements, and gained God's commendation, 11 : 1-40.

2. Exhortation to follow their example, or rather that of Christ, accepting the tasks and trials of life as the Father's discipline, 12 : 1-13.

3. Warning against moral failure, with its inexorable penalty, 12 : 14-17.

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4. Final contrast of the old revelation, in its material and repellent aspects, with the new, heavenly, ideal, and eternal, 12 : 18-29.

VI. General exhortations, personal matters, and farewell, 13 : 1-25.

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MORE IMPORTANT ABBREVIATIONS

AV	Authorized (King James) Version.
Gr.	Greek.
LXX.	Septuagint.
m	Margin.
SV	Standard American Version.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

I. CHRIST, THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW REVELATION,
SUPERIOR TO ALL OTHER MEDIATORS OF REVE-
LATION (ANGELS, MOSES), SUPREME IN THE
UNIVERSE, AND THE FULFILLER OF MAN'S
DESTINY OF UNIVERSAL DOMINION,
I: 1-2: 18

I. *The Son is shown from Scripture to be superior to angels, 1: 2*
I: 1-14.

1. GOD, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners,
2. hath at ^othe end of these days spoken unto us in ^o*his* Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through

¹ Gr. *a Son*.

A brief opening paragraph of address and salutation has probably disappeared from the beginning of the epistle.

The Theme of the Epistle: The Finality of the Revelation of God and Salvation through Jesus Christ, 1: 1-4.

1. The Greek order emphasizes the partial and diverse character of the old-time utterances of God through the prophets, by beginning with the words *in many portions and in many ways*. The writer shares with his readers acquaintance with this old-time prophetic revelation and acceptance of it.

2. **The end of these days.** An expression derived in part from the LXX. The writer conceives himself to be living at the end of an epoch, and awaiting the Messianic Age, cf. Acts 2: 14-21. **His Son.** Better, *a Son*. The indefiniteness of the word emphasizes the contrast with the prophets, and throws the emphasis upon the idea of sonship. The following clauses define this son, as one ordained heir of all things, through whom the world, conceived as the sum of the successive ages, was made. As thus heir and medium

3. whom also he made the ¹worlds; who ^obeing the ^oeffulgence of his ^oglory, and ^{o2} the very image of his substance, and ^oupholding all things ^oby the word of his power, when he had ^omade purification of sins, ^osat
4. down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become by so much better than the ^oangels, as he

¹ Gr. *ages*. ^o Or, *the impress of his substance*

of creation, he, with his revelation, stands immeasurably above the prophets and theirs.

3. **Being.** The sense is causal, *since he is*. **Effulgence.** Better, *refulgence, reflection*. The same rare word is used in Wisdom 7:26: For she (Wisdom) is the effulgence of the everlasting light, and the spotless mirror of the power of God. **Glory.** That is, his majesty, his sublime perfection, is reflected in this Son. **The very image of his substance.** *I.e., the exact stamp of his nature.* The completeness and exactness of the revelation made through the Son are thus emphasized. **Upholding.** The Son is the maintainer of the universe, as well as its heir and the medium of its creation. **By the word of his power.** Better, *by his word of power*; that is, *by his mighty word, his omnipotent command* (Thayer).

Made purification. *I.e., cleansed sinners from the guilt of their sins, by his sacrifice of himself.* See 7:26, 27; 9:11, 12, etc. **Sat down.** Better, *took his seat on high, at the right hand of Majesty*. Majesty is here a way of suggesting God in his sublimity. Cf. the *sitting at the right hand of power*, Matt. 26:64. The words echo a representation of the exalted state of the Messiah, found in Ps. 110:1, and quoted in the earliest gospels. The right hand is the place of preëminent honor.

4. **Angels.** The beings through whom, in Jewish belief, the Law was given to Moses (Gal. 3:19), and God's word was revealed to the prophets. It is as the mediators of the old revelation that they are mentioned here, in contrast with the Son, the medium of the new. His station is as much superior to that of the angels as his name of Son is above theirs. This contrast is continued in the following verses: he is Son and Firstborn, they are servants and worship him; he is eternal King, they are created ministers.

In this identification of Jesus, the Saviour of the believer, with the loftiest conception of Jewish speculative thought, the Messiah, the Son of God, the writer draws attention away from what they were likely to consider the lowly origin and humble life of Jesus and his

5. hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time,

°Thou art my Son,

Ps. 2 : 7

°This day have I begotten thee?

and again,

°I will be to him a Father,

2 Sam. 7 : 14

And he shall be to me a Son?

6. ¹ And when he again ² bringeth in the °firstborn into ³ the world he saith, And let all the angels of God wor-

Deut. 32 : 43 LXX ;
Ps. 97 : 7

¹ Or, And again, when he bringeth in ² Or, shall have brought in ³ Gr. the inhabited earth

disgraceful death, which constituted a serious stumbling-block for believers of the first centuries. See the careful interpretation of Jesus' sufferings given by the writer in the second chapter, and the words of II Clement, ch. 1: We ought not to think meanly of our Salvation, for when we think meanly of him, we expect also to receive meanly.

The Son's preëminence over angels in name, eternal dignity, and exalted office is shown from scripture, 1:5-14.

5. In this and the following verses a series of seven Old Testament passages bearing upon the Messianic Son of David are applied to Jesus, to show his superiority as Son of God to the angels who are God's servants. **Thou art my Son.** Ps. 2 : 7. This is God's solemn acknowledgment of the anointed of David's house as his chosen representative. **This day have I begotten thee.** An intensely graphic way of saying, To-day I have acknowledged thee as begotten by me, that is, as indeed my son. The writer applies these words to Jesus as the true and consummate anointed (Messiah) of God. **I will be to him a Father.** 2 Sam. 7 : 14. The words were first spoken of Solomon, but were extended in application to the line of Davidic kings.

6. The words applied in Deut. 32 : 43 in the LXX to God himself, are here applied to the Son of God, and understood to be spoken of him when God brings him again into the world, on the occasion of his triumphant Messianic return. The words of Ps. 97 : 7 may have influenced the language used here. **Firstborn.** A Messianic title, expressive not of physical generation, but of moral dignity, applied by Paul to Jesus, although never precisely as here. Col. 1 : 15, Rom. 8 : 29. Cf. Ps. 89 : 27, where God says of the Messi-

7. ship him. And of the angels ^ohe saith,
 Ps. 104 : 4 Who maketh^o his angels ¹winds,
 And his ministers a flame of fire:
8. but of the Son *he saith*,
 Ps. 45 : 6, 7 ²Thy throne, ^oO God, is for ever and ever;
 And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of ^{o3}thy
 kingdom.
9. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity;
 Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee
 With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

¹ Or, *spirits* ² SVM, *Thy throne is God for ever and ever* ³ The two oldest Greek manuscripts read *his*.

anic king, *I also will make him the firstborn*. The title here emphasizes the heirship and preëminence of the Son. The previous quotations have shown the Messiah's relation to God; he is his Son. This passage shows his relation to the angels; he commands their worship.

7. **He saith**. Here, as in vs. 1, and often in the epistle, God is conceived to be the speaker in the Old Testament. **His angels winds**. This sense, which appears in the LXX and which some find in the Hebrew itself (Perowne), sets forth the low estate of the messengers and ministers of God, whom he transforms into winds and flames, impersonal elements of nature, at his pleasure.

8, 9. The quotation is from Ps. 45 : 6, 7. Its difficulty lies in the fact that in it the Messianic king, whose marriage is celebrated in that psalm, is addressed as God. Some would indeed translate, *God is thy throne for ever and ever* (Westcott), while others explain that the Messianic king, as representing God's will and government on earth, is here, by a bold figure, directly addressed as God. The central thought of the quotation lies not in this address, but in the last-
 ing possession of royal dignity — throne, sceptre, anointing — by God's favor secured through uprightness and righteousness. **Thy kingdom**. Better, *his* (God's) *kingdom*. The king's upright rule marks his kingdom as God's. This glowing prophecy and congratulation, addressed originally to some Jewish king, is here transferred to Christ, as the rightful heir of all Messianic hopes and affirmations. Thus while the angels are God's humble servants, Jesus as Christ is possessed of eternal kingly dignity.

10. And,

Thou, Lord, in the beginning ¹ hast laid the foundation of the earth, Ps. 102 : 25-27

And the heavens are the works of thy hands:

11. They shall perish; but thou continuest:

And they shall all wax old as doth a garment;

12. And as a mantle shalt thou roll them up,

As a garment, and they shall be changed:

But thou art the same,

And thy years shall not fail.

13. But of which of the angels hath he said at any time,

Sit thou ^oon my right hand,

Ps. 110 : 1

Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet?

14. Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?

¹ SV *didst lay*

10-12. Words used of God by some exiled Jew are here applied to the Son, who as Messianic medium of creation and revelation, shares in the changeless and eternal nature of God himself. His infinite superiority to the angels is thus again manifest. The Son's creative work and eternal nature, already suggested in vss. 2 and 8, are brought out again in this quotation. The writer understands the Messiah, conceived in his creative rôle, to be addressed in the passage, and his nature, outlasting his own creation, marks him as far above mere angels.

13. Ps. 110, already echoed in vs. 3, supplies the crowning testimony to the exalted dignity of the Son. God has seated him at his own right hand, there to await the consummation of his triumph. **On my right hand.** This position associates the Son with God himself in dignity and authority. No such invitation was ever addressed to angels.

14. So far from sharing the supreme exaltation of the Son, angels are thus, by the testimony of the Jewish scriptures, serving spirits, sent on God's errands, for the benefit of the heirs of salvation. Their true position as compared with the Son, enthroned and eternal, and even with these heirs of salvation, becomes at once manifest.

2. *The consequent peril of rejecting the salvation offered by the Son, 2: 1-4*

2. °Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to °the things that were heard, °lest haply we drift
 2. away from them. For if the word spoken °through angels proved stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;
 3. how shall we escape, if we neglect ¹ so great salvation? which °having at the first been spoken through the Lord, °was confirmed unto us by them that heard;
 4. °God also bearing witness with them, both by °signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by ² gifts of the ³ Holy Ghost, according to his own will.

¹ SV *so great a etc.* ² Gr. *distributions.* ³ SV *Holy Spirit:* and so throughout this book.

1. **Therefore.** That is, by reason of this great superiority of the Son to prophets and angels. **The things that were heard.** The Christian teaching. **Lest.** The readers are in danger of falling into indifference.

2. The old revelation, though mediated through humbler beings than the Son, proved valid, and transgression of it brought invariable penalty. **Through angels.** The Jewish belief that the law was communicated to Moses through angels appears also in Gal. 3: 19: *The law . . . ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator.* Cf. Acts 7: 53. The writer's respect for the old law as the expression of God's will reappears in this verse.

3. *A fortiori*, the salvation offered through the Son demands attention and respect. **Having at the first been spoken.** Better, *after beginning to be uttered.* Jesus began the proclamation of salvation. **Was confirmed unto us.** The writer does not belong to those who heard the Lord speak, but, like his readers, received the word from those who had. In this he is unlike Paul, who conceives himself to have received his gospel directly from the risen Jesus. Yet cf. 1 Cor. 11: 2, 23.

4. **God also bearing witness.** Better, *While God joined in bearing witness* (to it). **Signs . . . wonders . . . manifold powers . . . gifts** (better, *portions*), **of Holy Spirit.** The extraordinary mani-

3. *Man's promised world-dominion realized in Christ, through his experience of suffering, 2: 5-18*
5. °For not unto angels did he °subject °¹the world to Ps. 8: 4-6
 6. come, whereof we speak. But one hath somewhere
 °testified, saying,
 °What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
 Or the son of man, that thou visitest him?
7. Thou madest him °²a little lower than the angels;
 Thou crownedst him with glory and honour,
 °³And didst set him over the works of thy hands:
8. Thou didst put all things in subjection under his
 feet.
 °For in that he subjected °all things unto him, °he
 left nothing that is not subject to him. °But now we

¹ Gr. *the inhabited earth* ² Or, *for a little while lower* ³ Many authorities omit
And didst . . . hands.

festations which attended the early preaching of salvation through the apostles and evangelists, cf. 1 Cor. 12-14.

5. **For.** *I.e.*, in explanation of God's wonderful testimony to the apostolic preaching, just described. **Subject.** *I.e.*, in prospect, intention. God has destined the dominion of the world for others than angels. **The world to come.** Better, *to be*. The Messianic world.

6. **Testified.** *I.e.*, solemnly affirmed. **What is man.** The psalmist's first thought of man is of his insignificance as compared with God.

7. The psalmist's second thought is of man's lofty position in the universe; but little below the angels themselves, and crowned with glory. **A little.** Better, *little*. The writer of Hebrews, however, understands the words to mean *for a little while*; cf. vs. 9. **And didst set him.** Man is potentially master of the created universe, that is, he has been destined to such mastery by God.

8. Universal dominion is the promised destiny of man. **For.** In explanation of the statement of vs. 5. **All things.** As shown by the last clause quoted. **He left nothing.** The world to be must therefore be subject to man. Paul speaks somewhat similarly in

9. see not yet all things subjected to him. But we behold him who hath been made ⁰¹a little lower than the angels, *even* Jesus, because of ⁰the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, ⁰that by the grace
10. of God he should taste death for every *man*. For ⁰it became him, ⁰for whom are all things, ⁰and through whom are all things, ²in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the ⁰³author of their salvation
11. perfect ⁰through sufferings. ⁰For both ⁰he that sanc-

¹ Or, *for a little while lower*² Or, *having brought*³ Or, *captain*

1 Cor. 15 : 27, in dealing with the same psalm. **But now.** Man has not realized his intended destiny of universal dominion.

9. The prophecy finds an unlooked-for fulfilment in Jesus. **A little.** Better, *for a little*. **The suffering of death.** In the death of Jesus, which was a stumbling-block to the readers, the writer finds rather the very ground of his exaltation. This humiliation, endured on behalf of men, crowns Jesus with the glory and honor spoken of by the psalmist. **That by the grace of God.** The purpose underlying all this is that Jesus should in accordance with God's gracious will experience death on behalf of all.

10. **It became him.** *I.e.*, God. **For whom . . . and through whom.** *I.e.*, as both final and efficient cause in the universe. **Author.** Better, *leader*. **Through sufferings.** The exaltation of the Son to his place at God's right hand, through an experience of humiliation and death, the writer asserts to be a procedure altogether fitting in God, as the constant guide and goal of the universe. This proposition must have been most difficult of acceptance for the readers of the epistle, to whom the ignominious death of Jesus seemed irreconcilable with his exalted Messianic office. The writer finds the key to the mystery in the evident necessity that the Son should share in the nature and experiences of the other sons whom God is bringing unto glory through him as leader.

11. **For.** In explanation of the application of the name sons to those saved through Christ, and, more fundamentally, in explanation of the whole proposition of vs. 10. **He that sanctifieth.** *I.e.*, the Son. **Of one.** *I.e.*, sprung from one parent. The emphasis is upon the unity of nature existing between the many sons and the Son. **For which cause.** Because of this common nature, the Son calls the many sons his brothers.

tifieth and they that are sanctified are all °of one:
°for which cause he is not ashamed to call them breth-

12. ren, saying,

I will declare thy name unto my brethren,

Ps. 22 : 22

°In the midst of the ¹congregation will I sing thy
praise.

13. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again,
Behold, I and the children ² which God hath given me.

Isa. 8 : 17

LXX.

Isa. 8 : 18

14. Since then °the children are sharers in ³flesh and
blood, he also himself °in like manner °partook of
the same; °that through death he ⁴might bring to
nought him that ⁵had the power of death, that is,

15. °the devil; and ⁴might °deliver °all them who through

¹ Or, church

² SV whom

³ Gr. blood and flesh.

⁴ Or, may

⁵ Or, hath

12. The words of Ps. 22 are often used by New Testament writers of Jesus, who himself uttered the opening words of this psalm upon the cross; Mark 15 : 34. The early Christians interpreted the psalm Messianically, as here. **In the midst of the congregation.** *I.e.*, publicly.

13. These quotations, Messianically understood by the writer, further exhibit the Son's participation in the lot of men, first in the trust in God which he, like them, exercises, and second in his submission, along with those of like origin, to God's will.

14. **The children**; *i.e.*, Christ's brethren, God's sons, as they are called above. **Flesh and blood.** Expressive of man's mortal nature, which was shared by Christ. **In like manner**; *i.e.*, with them. **Partook of the same.** Shared their mortal life. **That through death.** Christ's participation in human nature had this purpose, that through death he might overthrow the dominion of evil over men. How he did this the writer shows elsewhere. "Christ delivers from the fear of death by dying as a sinless one" (Bruce). **The devil.** The devil's sway is exercised in the realm of death (Davidson).

15. **Deliver.** This participation of Christ in the direst experience of his brethren robs it of its terror, and frees them from the fear which has hitherto enthralled them to the Lord of Death. **All . . . who.** Those who realize, as dying men, their bondage to death and the fear of it.

- fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.
- Isa. 41 : 8, 9 16. For ^overily not ¹ of angels doth he ^otake hold, but he
 17. taketh hold of ^othe seed of Abraham. ^oWherefore
^oit behoved him in all things to be made like
 Ps. 22 : 22 unto ^ohis brethren, that he might ²be a ^omerciful
 and ^ofaithful high priest in things pertaining
 to God, ^oto make propitiation for the sins of ^othe
 18. people. ^{o3} For ⁴in that he himself hath suffered
 being tempted, ^ohe is able to succour them that are
 tempted.

¹ SV to angels doth he give help but he giveth help to etc. ² SV become ³ Or, For having been himself tempted in that wherein he hath suffered ⁴ Or, wherein

16. **Verily.** Better, *of course*. **Take hold.** *I.e.*, help. It is not to angels, beings with no fear of death, that he extends his aid. **The seed of Abraham;** in Paul's sense: *If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed*, Gal. 3:29. Christian believers, heirs of Abraham's faith, are the objects of the succor which Jesus brings.

17. **Wherefore.** *I.e.*, because of his purpose to help men. **It behoved him.** *I.e.*, he was bound, by the conditions of his task, to participate throughout in the experience of mankind. **His brethren.** A reminiscence of the quotation in vs. 12. **Merciful.** *I.e.*, compassionate. **Faithful.** Suggesting the Godward aspect of his priestly task. The writer's distinctive interpretation of Jesus as high priest is here first introduced. His human experience prepares him to be a compassionate minister for men. **To make propitiation.** The duty of the high priest in Judaism. **The people.** An Old Testament term for the congregation of Israel, here applied, like "the seed of Abraham" above, to Christian believers.

18. **For in that,** etc. Rather, *For because he himself has been tempted in that which he suffered*. **He is able.** Equipped through his experience of the temptation to shun the suffering met in the path of duty, to sympathize with those who, like his readers, are tempted to fall away from their divinely appointed tasks.

II. CHRIST THE SON GREATER THAN MOSES THE SERVANT, AND HIS REST SUPERIOR TO THAT USHERED IN BY JOSHUA, 3: 1-4: 13

1. *Christ and Moses*, 3: 1-6

3: 3

3. °Wherefore, °holy brethren, partakers of °a heavenly calling, °consider the °Apostle and °High Priest of
2. °our confession, *even* Jesus; °who was faithful to °him that °¹appointed him, °as also was Moses in °all °²his
3. house. °For he °hath been counted worthy of more Num. 12: 7

¹ Gr. *made*.

² That is, *God's house*. See Num. xii. 7.

1. **Wherefore.** *I.e.*, in view of the whole argument thus far, especially the conception of Jesus as a faithful high priest. **Holy brethren** recalls the designation of believers as sanctified, 2: 11, and as Christ's brethren, 2: 12. **A heavenly calling.** A call to the possession of heaven. The contrast of the heavenly with the earthly, so characteristic of the epistle, begins now to appear. **Consider.** Better, *observe*. **Apostle.** *I.e.*, ambassador, commissioner. The reference is to the "sending" of Moses, Ex. 3: 10. **High priest.** These titles the writer applies to Jesus, as the highest in the Old Testament religion. **Our confession.** The religion that we profess.

2. **Who was faithful.** Better, *as being faithful, i.e.*, that he was faithful; already affirmed in general of Jesus in 2: 17. **Him that appointed.** God. The same word "made" is used of appointing the apostles, Mark 3: 14. **Appointed him.** *I.e.*, an apostle. **As also was Moses.** The commissioner of our religion does not fall short of the commissioner of the old even in that faithfulness in which Moses so excelled. **All his house.** *I.e.*, God's house. Christ as well as Moses had to do with all God's house.

3. Jesus not only equals Moses in his faithfulness in his equally comprehensive task ("in all God's house"); he surpasses him in dignity, as the creator of the house to which Moses belonged. **For.** Introducing the ground of the previous exhortation, *consider*.

Num. 12:7

- glory than Moses, by so much as he that ^o1 built ^othe
 4. house hath more honour ^othan the house. ^oFor every
 house is ¹ buildd by some one; ^obut he that ¹ built
 5. all things is God. And ¹ Moses indeed was faithful
 in all ² his house as a servant, ^ofor a testimony of
 those things which were afterward to be spoken;
 6. ^obut Christ as a son, over ² his house; ^owhose
 house are we, ^oif we hold fast our boldness and the
 glorying of our hope firm unto the end.

¹ Or, *established*² That is, *God's house*. See Num. xii. 7

Hath been counted worthy. And hence enjoys. The emphasis is upon his state of dignity, not upon the attainment of it. **Built.** *I.e.*, built and equipped. **The house.** In the sense of house and household, including the servants of it. **Than the house.** Moses, as created, is part of God's house, his world, or church. The Son is of more glory than the whole house, much more than a member of it. Thus the Son, as creator, stands far above Moses in glory and honor.

4. **For every house.** A general remark, suggested by the expression *built the house* used above. Every house has an immediate builder, just as the church had in Christ. **But he that built.** Back of all builders is God, the ultimate creator of all, who through Christ made the worlds, 1: 2, and the church, 3: 3.

5. Moses, with all his faithfulness, was but a servant in the house in which Christ is the Son. It was as a servant that Moses was faithful; cf. Num. 12: 7. **For a testimony.** To bear witness to the things that were to be said, that is, later, by Christ himself. The witnessing of Moses subordinates him, and the revelation of which he was the representative, to the loftier revelation to which he as a servant pointed.

6. **But Christ.** *Sc.* was faithful. Christ was faithful in a loftier and more responsible relation than Moses, presiding as Son and heir over God's house. **Whose house.** Or, *and we are his house*. Christian believers are preëminently the house of God. In this the writer's thought of the transient and provisional nature of Judaism and the superiority of Christianity is again reflected. **If we hold fast.** His readers are in danger of loosening their hold upon the boldness and boasting of their hope. He reminds them that they must hold their Christian hope steadfast unto the end.

2. *Warning against apostasy and unbelief, and consequent failure to attain the Rest of God, 3: 7-4: 13*
7. °Wherefore, even as °the Holy Ghost saith,
 °To-day, °if ye shall hear his voice,
8. °Harden not your hearts, °as in the °provocation,
 Like as in the day of the °¹temptation in the wilder-
 ness,
9. °²Wherewith your fathers tempted *me* °by proving *me*,
 And saw my works °forty years.
10. °Wherefore I was displeased with °this generation,
 And said, They do °³alway °err in their heart:

Ps. 95: 7-11

¹ SV trial² SV Where³ SV always

The moral failure of the Hebrews due to unbelief, 3: 7-19.

7. **Wherefore.** *I.e.*, in view of the promise of v. 6. **The Holy Ghost saith.** The words of the Old Testament are appropriated by the writer, as a warning needed by his readers. The LXX form of it, which is here in general followed, departs from the Hebrew in some points. **To-day.** In contrast with the day of temptation in the wandering long before. **If ye shall hear.** Hearing God's voice carries with it the responsibility of heeding it. In the Hebrew, this clause is a wish: *Oh that ye would hear.*

8. **Harden not your hearts.** *I.e.*, into unbelief and indifference. **"Provocation and temptation** are translations of the Hebrew Meribah and Massah, proper names in the Psalm, though having this meaning" (Davidson). For the incidents referred to, see Ex. 17: 1-7; Num. 20: 1-13; Deut. 33: 8. **As. Sc.**, your fathers did. **Provocation.** *I.e.*, of God. **Temptation.** *I.e.*, the trying of God. These events fell the one near the beginning, the other toward the close of the wilderness wandering.

9. **Wherewith.** Better, *where*. **By proving.** *I.e.*, by putting to the proof. As here quoted, the passage means, *Where your fathers for forty years tried my works by putting them to the proof, and saw them.* **Forty years** suggests the unreasonable prolongation of this incredulous testing; although the fathers saw the works, they continued to test them. *Forty years* in both Hebrew and LXX limits *I was displeased*, as in vs. 17.

10. **Wherefore.** Because of this prolonged incredulity. **This.**

But they did not °know °my ways;

11. °¹As I sware in my wrath,

°²They shall not enter into my °rest.

12. °Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart °of unbelief, °in falling

13. away from °the living God: °but exhort one another day by day °so long as it is called To-day; °lest any one of you be °hardened by the °deceitfulness of sin:

14. for we are become °partakers ³ of Christ, if we hold

¹ SVM So

² Gr. *If they shall enter.*

³ Or, *with*

LXX reads *that*; the generation in the wilderness is meant. **Err.** *I.e., wander*, suggestive of spiritual wanderings akin to their wanderings in the wilderness. **Know.** That is, either *understand*, or *learn*. **My ways.** Ignorance or dislike of which caused their *wandering* in heart. That thought is here repeated in negative form.

11. **As** connects the oath with the anger reflected in it; *I was angered with this generation . . . even as I sware in my wrath.* The psalmist's reference is to Num. 14: 21-23, 28-35. **Rest.** Used as in Deut. 12: 9: *The rest and inheritance which Jehovah thy God giveth thee; i.e., the promised land, and the security anticipated there.* This quotation, 3: 7-11, serves as a text for the warnings and admonitions that follow, 3: 12-4: 13.

12. **Take heed.** The writer applies the warning of the psalm to his readers. Many scholars connect this with the *Wherefore* of vs. 7, making 7b-11 parenthetical. **Of unbelief.** *I.e., an evil, unbelieving heart.* **In falling away.** Indicative of the content of the previous expression, *i.e., the unbelieving heart will manifest itself in apostasy from God.* **The living God.** A favorite designation with the writer (cf. 9: 14; 10: 31; 12: 22), as with Paul, and strongly suggesting that it is a lapse not into Judaism, but paganism, that threatens the readers.

13. **But.** In contrast with neglect or indifference. **So long as it is called To-day.** *I.e., while it is still possible to speak of To-day — the interval of opportunity.* The writer gives the *To-day* of the psalmist a Christian sense, viz., the fleeting present age preceding the Messianic era. **Lest any one of you.** The clause gives either the purpose or the content of the exhortation which the writer enjoins. **Hardened.** Echoes the *Harden not* of the psalmist, vs. 8. **Deceitfulness of sin.** The sin of unbelief threatens them in disguise.

14. **Partakers of Christ.** *I.e., either sharers in the Christ* or

fast °the beginning of our confidence firm °unto the
15. end: °while it is said,

To-day, if ye shall hear his voice,

Ps. 95: 7, 8

Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

16. °For °who, °when they heard, °did provoke? °nay,
did not all they °that came out of Egypt °by Moses?

partners of the Christ; the latter meaning is the more probable, in view of the writer's representation of Christ as leader and brother. Participation in this partnership is conditioned on steadfast adherence to the faith they have professed. **The beginning of our confidence.** The conviction and assurance which we felt at the beginning of our experience. **Unto the end.** The readers of the epistle are in grave danger of growing cold and weary amid their trials and disappointments.

15. The first couplet of the quotation is here repeated, with direct application to the readers addressed. The warning of the psalmist is now applied directly to them. **While it is said.** The verse may be connected with the preceding, *We are partners . . . if we hold fast; as it is said, If ye shall hear his voice to-day, etc.*; or it may be regarded as independent; *While it is called to-day, i.e., while the interval of opportunity still continues, . . . harden not your hearts.* The latter is the more probable, and the verse thus resumes the exhortation of vs. 13, leaving vs. 14 a parenthesis. The exhortation that no one be hardened which the readers are told to give each other, vs. 13, is here made directly to them in the very words of the psalm.

16. This and the following verses in a series of questions point the lessons of the Israelites' moral failure, and find a parallel between their condition and that of the readers. **For.** The writer defends his bold application of this sinister warning to the believers addressed; they are not so unlike those Israelites of old who fell victims to unbelief and apostasy. They doubtless thought themselves in no such dire peril. **Who.** Just who were these provokers of God, whose sin and fate have become proverbial? **When they heard;** better, *although they heard.* The readers, too, have heard God's voice. **Did provoke.** Referring to the *provocation* mentioned in the psalm. **Nay, did not all.** They were not a few, but a multitude, a whole generation. The conduct of one's fellows may be no sound criterion of the will of God. **That came out of Egypt.** All these apostates had started for the Promised Land with Moses, just as the readers have set out for the better country; a suggestion that the Christian profession once made is no guarantee against subsequent moral

Num. 14:29

17. And with whom was he °displeased °forty years?
 was it not with them that °sinned, °whose ¹carcases
 18. fell in the wilderness? And °to whom sware he that
 they should not enter into °his rest, but to them that
 19. were disobedient? And we see that °they were not
 able to enter in because of unbelief.
 4. °Let us fear °therefore, lest haply, °a promise being left

¹ Gr. *limbs*; SV *bodies*

failure. **By Moses.** These men had at first been believers in Moses, and had followed him forth from Egypt. A striking parallel is thus instituted between the Israelites and the readers of the epistle, yet so skilfully and tactfully as to make offence impossible.

17. The next step in the moral failure of the Israelites; their provocation incensed God through forty years. The writer is tracing the steps through which Israel came to be excluded from the Promised Rest. **Displeased.** Better, *incensed, wroth*. **Forty years.** Here connected, not as in vs. 9 with *saw my works*, but as in the Hebrew and LXX, with *I was displeased*. **Sinned.** Herein lay the occasion of God's wrath and the key to the fate of the Israelites. It was against them as sinners that his wrath was directed. **Whose carcases fell.** Their fate, declared in Num. 14:29, is mentioned here in dreadful proximity to the fault which caused it. Dying in misery and disappointment, their bodies had been left behind unburied in the desert, all through their sin, which had incensed God against them.

18. The final step in the history that is being traced; God in his anger swore that they, as disobedient, should never enter into his Rest. **To whom.** The question, like the others, fixes attention on the persons who incurred God's curse; they were no others than those who disobeyed. **His rest.** As above, the inheritance, the Promised Land of security and ease.

19. From this survey the writer concludes that the moral failure of Israel was due to unbelief. **They were not able.** Their failure to reach the promised rest in Canaan was at bottom owing simply to unbelief, which manifested itself in disobedience and the provoking of God by continually putting him and his works to the proof.

The rest unattained by the Hebrews awaits believers, who have need of redoubled diligence to secure it, 4: 1-13.

1. The lesson and warning are drawn from the fate of Israel. **Let us fear.** We dare not be too sure of our inheritance, because

- of entering into °his rest, any one of you °should seem
 2. to have °come short of it. °For indeed we have had
 °¹ good tidings °preached unto us, °even as also they:
 but °the word of hearing °did not profit them, because
 °² they were not united by faith with them that heard.
 3. °³ For we °⁴ which have believed do enter °into that
 rest; even °as he hath said,

As I swear in my wrath,

°⁵ They shall not enter into °my rest:

Ps. 95 : 11

¹ Or, *a gospel* ² SV, with some ancient authorities, reads *it was*. ³ Some ancient authorities read *We therefore*. ⁴ SV *who* ⁵ Gr. *If they shall enter*.

we have heard a gospel and set out in faith for the better country, for so did they. **Therefore.** In view of the similarity of their early condition to ours. **A promise being left.** Or, *although a promise is left*. The promise, unattained by them, is still valid and open, but on the old terms and penalties. **His rest.** The rest as used in the psalm and in Deut. 12:9 denoted the Promised Land. As here used, however, it has a larger meaning, viz., salvation conceived as participation in the eternal rest of God, akin indeed to the rest long before promised to the Israelites, but far grander. **Should seem.** Rather, *should be found, i.e.,* in the forensic sense of being convicted. **Come short.** Fallen short of attaining it.

2. **For.** Introducing the ground of the apprehension just expressed. **Good tidings.** Better, *a gospel*. **Preached.** As the Israelites had heard his voice, so these believers have heard it in the gospel. **Even as they.** The writer does not hesitate to say that the Israelites had a gospel preached to them. This gospel concerned the promised rest. **The word of hearing.** Or, *the word which they heard*. **Did not profit;** to hear was not enough, and is not enough for us. **They were not united.** Lit., *mingled, blended*. The more probable reading is, *it, i.e.,* the word heard, *was not united*. There was no vital appropriation of the word of God which they heard, and this was due to want of faith, by which alone such appropriation could be effected. Cf. 3:19.

3. The affirmation here made about Christian believers is similar to that made in 3:6, *We are God's house*. **For.** The writer supports the claim of vs. 1, that a promise of entering into the Rest of God is still open and valid. **Which have believed.** *I.e.,* in Christ. **Into that rest.** Christian believers have a share in the ideal rest

- although °the works were finished from the foundation
 4. of the world. °For °he hath said °somewhere of the
 Gen. 2:2 seventh *day* on this wise, And God rested on the seventh
 5. day from all his works; and in this *place* °again,
 Ps. 95:11 °¹ They shall not enter into my rest.

¹ Gr. *If they shall enter.*

long since promised and still open to possessors of faith. Vss. 3b-10 supply the proof of this proposition. **As he hath said.** The words of the psalm, as used here, prove that there is a rest, and that it has not been attained (Westcott). **My rest.** The following clause shows that the rest is here understood in connection with that rest of God into which he entered when, after creation, he rested from all the works which he had made, Gen. 2:2. **The works.** *I.e.*, the creative activities mentioned in Gen. 2:2 as made and completed. The completion of the works, ushering in the divine rest, shows that the rest exists, and the failure of the Israelites to enter it is not due to any unreadiness on the part of the rest or of God. From another point of view, "that creation-rest does not exhaust the idea and promise of rest" (Bruce). This suggests that the offer of rest to the Israelites, especially as it was not taken advantage of, did not exhaust God's purpose of giving rest to his people. The divine purpose of rest-giving transcends not only the first but the second of these rests as well.

4. **For.** In support of this view of the divine rest the account of creation is appealed to. **He hath said.** God or the Holy Spirit is thought of by the writer as speaking in scripture, cf. 3:7; 10:15. **Somewhere.** In Gen. 2:2, but the writer does not interrupt his argument to cite the book, which he doubtless knew as Genesis. That God has provided a rest and has himself entered into it is established for his argument by this passage.

5. **Again.** The writer places beside the passage quoted stating the establishment of a rest, another which shows that the Israelites did not enter upon it. The difference between the two rests does not disturb him, since he conceives the greater to include the less, or rather both to be but parts in a grander divine purpose of providing rest for all who will lay hold of it through faith. **They shall not enter.** That God swore this *in his wrath* shows the writer that his purpose had been that they should enter, and that as they have failed to meet God's conditions of entrance, the rest provided must still be awaiting appropriation.

6. The promise of rest, forfeited by the Israelites, holds over, since

6. Seeing ^otherefore it remaineth that ^osome should enter thereinto, and ^othey to whom ^{o1} the good tidings were ^obefore preached failed to enter in ^obecause of disobedience, ^ohe ^oagain ^odefineth a ^ocertain day, ² saying ^oin David, ^oafter so long a time, ^oTo-day, ³ as it hath been before said,

To-day if ye shall hear his voice,
Harden not your hearts.

Ps. 95 : 7, 8

8. For if ^{o4}Joshua had given them rest, he would not

¹ Or, *the gospel was* ² Or, *To-day, saying in David, after so long a time, as it hath been, etc.* ³ SV *even as hath been said before.* ⁴ Gr. *Jesus.*

God's intention was that men should share that rest with him. **Therefore.** In view of the two passages just quoted. **Some should enter.** The readiness of the rest, and God's purpose that men should share it, are not to be disappointed; some are to be found to enter the rest. **They to whom.** The wilderness-generation of Israelites. **The good tidings were.** Better, *a gospel was*. The writer conceives the revelation of Moses to have been a gospel, a welcome declaration of God's will. **Before.** In contrast with the generation to which the gospel of Christ was presented. **Because of disobedience.** As shown in 3 : 18.

7. **He.** God, or the Holy Spirit, speaking in scripture. **Again.** This had before been done at the time of the Exodus. **Defineth.** Or, *appoints*. **A certain day.** With this should be connected the phrase **To-day**. Thus: *He again appoints a day, To-day, saying, etc.* **In David.** The writer, like other ancient readers of the Old Testament, ascribed the Psalms to David. In the LXX this psalm has the name of David in its title, but not in the Hebrew. **After so long a time.** *I.e.*, as intervened between the Exodus and the writing of Ps. 95. **To-day.** The renewal of the invitation to the rest which is implied in the words of the psalm implies that the rest is still available.

8. The renewed invitation to the rest shows that the generation which took possession of Canaan did not fully realize God's purpose of giving rest to his people. **Joshua.** The readers might have rejoined, that while the wilderness generation indeed forfeited the rest of God, *i.e.*, the inheritance in Canaan, their posterity under Joshua certainly achieved it. The writer seeks to anticipate this objection, pointing to God's renewal through the psalmist of the invitation to share in the rest, as evidence that the rest has never

9. have spoken ^oafterward of another day. ^oThere remaineth ^otherefore ^oa sabbath rest for ^othe people
 10. of God. ^oFor ^ohe that is entered into ^ohis rest hath
 Gen. 2:2 himself also rested from his works, as God did from
 11. his. Let us ^otherefore ^ogive diligence to enter ^ointo

been fully realized and appropriated by men, as God intended. **Afterward.** The psalm, written long after the days of Joshua and naming To-day as a time for hearing God's voice and accepting his promised rest, shows that more had been intended by God's earlier invitations than mere residence in Canaan.

9. The proposition here arrived at by the writer importantly supports his assertion in vs. 3, *We who have believed do enter into that rest.* **There remaineth.** Since the promise of rest has never hitherto been thoroughly appropriated or fulfilled. **Therefore;** in view of the argument of vss. 3b-8. **A sabbath rest.** Gk. *a sabbatism*; by substituting this word for the one hitherto used for rest in the epistle, the writer connects the promised rest more distinctly with the rest entered upon by God on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2). Such a sabbath rest as God himself enjoys is in store for the faithful, obedient, persevering people of God. It is, therefore, not mere repose after toil and care, but in some degree a participation in God's blessedness. Under the form of this rest, or sabbath rest, it must be remembered, the writer is setting forth the Messianic salvation, the highest good, the goal of existence. **The people of God.** In itself this expression may apply to the Jewish people of old, but as used here its primary application is to Christian believers; cf. 3:6; 4:3.

10. **For.** In explanation of the remarkable identification just made of the rest reserved for the people of God with the sublime sabbath rest entered upon by God after creation, the writer points out the inward propriety of this identification. **He that.** The reference is not primarily to Christ, but is general; *whoever*. **His rest.** *I.e., God's rest.* Those who enter into God's rest do so after a certain creative activity, not wholly unlike that of God himself, and thus their rest is properly such a sabbath rest as God himself enjoys. While the writer's argument seems at some points curious and fanciful, he is here shaping the sublime thought that God's ideal for man's destiny far transcends all feeble human settings forth.

11. The writer turns from his argument to exhort his readers to profit by its lessons. The constant practical purpose underlying the epistle again shows itself. **Therefore.** In view of the considerations advanced in vss. 2-10. **Give diligence.** *Be strenuous, exert ourselves.* **Into that rest.** The writer has shown that it is available

that rest, that °no man fall ¹ after °the same example
 12. of disobedience. °For °the word of God is °living,
 and active, and °sharper than any two-edged sword,
 and piercing even to the dividing of °soul and spirit, of
 both °joints and marrow, and °quick to discern the

¹ Or, *into* Gr. *in*.

for the people of God and that believers do enter it, 4:3, 9. The great salvation (2:3) has been described as dominion over the world, 2:5-8, as deliverance from death, 2:14, 15, and now as participation in the sabbath rest of God, 3:7-4:10. **No man.** This individual feeling characterizes many of the writer's warnings, cf. 3:12; 4:1. **The same example of disobedience.** Following his general plan of finding types of Christian experience in Hebrew history, the author urges that the readers, who, like the Israelites, have heard a gospel, and set out for a better country, must be on their guard, lest, like them, they glide into unbelief and disobedience, and finally forfeit the promised rest and incur the wrath of God. The sin of the Israelites is described as disobedience here as in 3:18 and 4:6. It is implied that the temptation of the readers of the epistle is substantially identical with that of the Israelites, viz., to refuse to recognize God's voice and hand in the world about them and in their own experience.

12. **For.** The following vss. enforce the exhortation just given. The impossibility of deceiving or escaping the word of God is first emphasized. **The word of God.** Not in a personal sense, i.e., Christ, but in the comprehensive sense of all God's expression of himself to men, in scripture, in experience, in Christ, and in direct spiritual appeal. The word of God which the readers hear and must heed is especially meant. **Living, and active.** This revelation principle, here almost personified, is described as living and vigorously operative; it is not dead or inert. **Sharper.** Sharpness is predicated of the divine word or Logos by Philo, but in a different sense, that of cutting or carving the universe out of chaos, in creation, and of dividing material from immaterial, etc. **Of soul and spirit.** Not *of soul from spirit*, but capable of severing both. By soul and spirit the whole mental being of man is meant. **Of joints and marrow.** The piercing word is irresistible; nothing can resist it or turn it aside; it shears through soul and spirit, as the keen sword through flesh and bone. The figurative is in this description blended with the actual, yet in such a way as to heighten the effect. **Quick to discern.** Rather, *critical, discriminative, judge of.* **Thoughts**

13. °thoughts and intents of the heart. And °there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and °laid open before °the eyes °of him with whom °we have to do.

and intents. *Considerations and conceptions* of the heart; others, the *impulses (motives) and reflections*.

13. The word has been described as vital, vigorous and searching; its resistless universal survey is now set forth. **There is no creature.** Not a creature is unseen by the word, which having been spoken of as capable of judging, is now personified. Yet some would understand that God is meant throughout the verse. **Laid open.** Or, *laid bare, i.e.,* at his mercy. The idea of defencelessness attaches to this word, which seems to come from the wrestling school. **The eyes.** Fresh emphasis upon the all-beholding vision of the word. **Of him.** *I.e.,* probably, of the word, although some would understand the eyes of God to be meant. **We have to do.** *Gk., we have the account, reckoning, i.e., we have to reckon.* The two verses present an overwhelming reënforcement of the warning not to fall into Israel's disobedience.

III. CHRIST ABOVE AARON AND ALL EARTHLY HIGH PRIESTS, THE FINAL, ETERNAL, SINLESS, OATH- ATTESTED HIGH PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK,

4: 14-7: 28

1. *Exhortation (serving as transition and introduction),
to hold fast and to approach God with boldness,
conscious of the presence with him of a sym-
pathetic and potent high priest,*

4: 15

4: 14-16

14. °Having °then a °great high priest, who hath °passed
through the heavens, Jesus °the Son of God, let us
15. °hold fast °our confession. °For °we have not a
high priest that °cannot be touched with the feeling

14. **Having.** *I.e., since we have.* **Then.** *Or, therefore.* The fearful thought of responsibility to the all-seeing word gives way to the more hopeful and reassuring reference to the great high priest. The rigorous and resistless word inspires fear; the great high priest, hope and love. The writer returns to a conception of Jesus already twice mentioned, 2: 17; 3: 1, but as yet undeveloped in the epistle. **Great** distinguishes this high priest from ordinary holders of that office. **Passed through the heavens.** And so entered the very presence of God, as the earthly high priest passed through the veil. Jesus' passage through the heavens shows his incomparable superiority to these Jewish high priests. **The Son of God.** A title of dignity already dwelt upon by the writer in contrasting Jesus with Moses and the angels, 1: 1-3: 6. **Hold fast.** The writer loses no opportunity to enforce practically the lesson of steadfastness and faith to which all his argument is directed. **Our confession.** *I.e., that which we profess.*

15. **For.** Introducing a ground for this holding fast. **We have not.** The writer sets out boldly to meet possible objections, that Christ, as without sin, or as sublime Son of God, can have no real sympathy with frail, struggling men. **Cannot be touched,**

of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points
 16. °tempted like as *we are*, yet °without sin. Let us
 therefore °draw near with °boldness unto the °throne
 of grace, that we may °receive mercy, and may °find
 grace to help *us* in time of need.

2. *Christ a true High Priest by his divine appointment
 and his human experience, 5 : 1-10.*

5. °For every high priest, °being taken from among men,
 is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that
2. he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: °who
 can °bear gently with the °ignorant and erring, °for that

etc. Better, *cannot have sympathy with our weaknesses*. **Tempted like as we are.** *I.e., tried in like manner.* Jesus' full experience of human trial qualifies him to sympathize with his brethren. **Without sin.** His perfect withstanding of the test accredits him as the perfect high priest.

16. A new exhortation, based upon the character and experience of the great high priest and our relation to him. **Draw near.** *I.e., in worship and petition.* **Boldness.** Confidence, possible through the presence of the great high priest. **Throne of grace.** God is thus indirectly described, with especial emphasis upon his sublime dignity (the throne) and his benign purpose (of grace). **Receive mercy.** *I.e., in forgiveness and restoration.* **Find grace.** Spiritual strength and encouragement for further tasks are secured in the consciousness of God's gracious favor.

1. **For.** This sympathetic, representative quality possessed by Jesus is necessary to the high priestly function. **Being taken.** Better, *is taken from among men and is appointed.* The high priest is in a twofold sense representative of the men for whom he ministers. The tone of this whole passage strongly suggests that it is addressed to persons with little acquaintance with high priests and their duties, and thus accords well with the Roman destination of the epistle. The model high priest is at once man himself and he is appointed in men's behalf. He does not appoint himself; he *is taken and is appointed.* The writer leaves room for the divine call, which is the controlling thought in this passage.

2. **Who can.** Better, *and he can.* **Bear gently with.** Or, *feel gently or leniently towards.* **Ignorant and erring.** For such

3. he himself also is °compassed with infirmity; and °by reason thereof is bound, as for the people, so also for
4. himself, to offer for sins. And °no man taketh the honour unto himself, but when he is called of God,
5. even °as was Aaron. So °Christ also °glorified not himself °to be made a high priest, but °he that spake unto him,

Thou art my Son,

Ps. 2 : 7

This day have I begotten thee:

only, and not for wilful sinners, does the high priest make atonement. This Old Testament idea seems to have had strong influence upon the writer. **For that.** The high priest's capacity for leniency is due to his own consciousness of frailty. **Compassed with infirmity.** A bold figurative expression, *enveloped with weakness.*

3. **By reason thereof.** Better, *because of it, i.e.,* the infirmity. It is the high priest's own weakness that leads to his offering for himself as well as for the people for whom he ministers. Cf. Lev. 16 : 11-14.

4. **No man taketh.** The call of God is necessary to make a man high priest, as already implied in the passive verbs used in vs. 1. **As was Aaron.** Ex. 28 : 1; Num. 18 : 1. The case of Aaron is cited in illustration of the principle just stated. The writer here develops the second and more important thought of the paragraph, the divine call to the high priesthood. In all these references to the high priestly office it is clear that there is no thought of the hard and ambitious men who in the first century held that office in Jerusalem; the writer's interest is rather in the ideal of the office as set forth in the Law. His indifference to later, almost contemporary, Judaism is shown in his noble picture of the ideal high priest, so different from the high priests of the last years of the temple service. Cf. Josephus, *Antt.* 15 : 2, 3; 20 : 8, 9.

5. **Christ.** Better, *the Christ.* **Glorified not himself.** He did not arrogate the office to himself, or seek it. **To be made.** The infinitive here "defines more closely the content of the action of the previous verb" (Burton). **He that spake unto him.** *Sc., did so glorify him.* Without naming God as calling him to be high priest, the writer designates him as the speaker of Ps. 2 : 7, already quoted in 1 : 5. That acknowledgment of the Messianic Son is now made to preface the acknowledgment of the Messianic priest, quoted from Ps. 110, from which the words *Sit thou at my right hand* have been already quoted, 1 : 13; cf. 1 : 3.

6. as he saith also in another *place*,

Thou art a priest for ever

After the order of Melchizedek.

7. °Who in °the days of his flesh, having offered up °prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able °to save him ¹from death,
8. and °having been heard for his godly fear, °though he was a Son, yet °learned obedience by the things which
- ✓ 9. he suffered; and having been °made perfect, he became unto all them that °obey him °the ²author of

¹ Or, out of ² Gr. cause.

6. This Messianic oracle supplies the text for the central portion of the epistle, the eternal Melchizedek priesthood of Christ. As used in the Old Testament it forms part of an address to the Messianic king, the language of which has already been freely applied by the writer to Christ.

7. **Who.** Better, *and he, i.e., Christ.* **The days of his flesh.** *I.e., his life upon earth.* **Prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears.** The agony in Gethsemane is before the writer's mind. The tears are not mentioned in the gospel accounts of that event. **To save him from death.** Cf. Mk. 14:36, *Remove this cup from me.* **Having been heard.** It is implied that his prayer was in some real sense answered; perhaps in the resurrection from the dead.

8. **Though he was a Son.** That is, already a loyal and obedient Son. **Learned obedience.** Came into further and deeper experience of obedience through the increasing difficulty of obeying, as his prescribed tasks grew more and more difficult. The high priesthood to which he was appointed, so far from being an office to be coveted, was one entered upon only through an arduous discipline of suffering, which taxed even Christ's filial obedience. The fact that Christ was called of God to the office is thus thrown into high relief.

9. **Made perfect.** That is, through this discipline of suffering, as in a similar connection in 2:10. **Obey him.** Through his own unflagging obedience to God's call to this priestly service, Jesus is entitled to the obedience of his followers. **The author.** *Lit., cause.* **Eternal salvation.** An expression found in Isa. 45:17. The thought here is quite in line with that of 2:10.

10. °eternal salvation; °named °of God a high priest Isa. 45 : 17
 °after the order of Melchizedek. Ps. 110 : 4

3. *Complaint and Rebuke of the Readers' Backwardness
 coupled with Warning and Encouragement,*
 5 : 11-6 : 20.

11. °Of ¹whom we have °many things to say, and hard
 of °interpretation, °seeing ye °are become dull of
 12. °hearing. For °when °by reason of the time ye ought
 to be °teachers, ye have need again ²that some one

¹ Or, *which* ² Or, *that one teach you which be the rudiments*

10. **Named.** Or, *since he is saluted.* **Of God.** The emphasis continues to rest upon the fact that Jesus was called by *God* to the high priestly task. **After the order of Melchizedek.** And hence qualified to provide enduring, eternal salvation, whereas the high priest after Aaron's order could make only a temporary atonement, which had to be oft-repeated. The Christ has been said in the psalm to be priest forever, after Melchizedek's order. He who is *priest forever* brings *eternal salvation*.

The spiritual immaturity and sluggishness of the readers, 5 : 11-6 : 3.

11. **Of whom.** Better, *and about him, i.e., Christ*, as Melchizedek priest, or Melchizedek as a type of Christ. **Many things to say.** More exactly, *what we have to say is considerable.* **Interpretation;** here rather *expression*. What the writer has to say is hard to express intelligibly to the readers. **Seeing.** Rather, *Since.* **Are become.** The writer speaks of them as in their second childhood, their dotage (Bruce). These are not simply the limitations of infancy and childhood. **Hearing.** Lit., *ears*. By these reproofs the writer seeks to move the readers to attend closely to his exposition of the priesthood of Christ.

12. **When.** Better, *although.* **By reason of the time.** The readers have long since been evangelized, and a long Christian experience already lies behind them. **Teachers.** In view of their opportunity and experience. This rebuke is evidently addressed to a church especially privileged and yet slow to come to a realization of its duty to teach, — a characteristic impossible to harmonize with Jerusalem as the destination of the letter. **Of the first principles.** Lit., *of the beginning.* *The rudiments of the beginning*

- teach you the rudiments °of the ¹first principles of
 °the oracles of God; and are °become such as have
 13. need °of milk, °and not of °solid food. For every one
 that partaketh of milk is °without experience of °the
 14. word of righteousness; for he is a °babe. But solid
 food is for ³full-grown men, *even* those who by reason
 of use have their senses °exercised to discern good
 and evil.
6. °Wherefore ⁴let us °⁵cease to speak of the first princi-

¹ Gr. *beginning*. ² SVM *inexperienced in*. ³ Or, *perfect* ⁴ SV *leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us* ⁵ Gr. *leave the word of the beginning of Christ*.

means *the beginning-rudiments, i.e., the first principles*. The usual rendering is pleonastic. **The oracles of God.** Ordinarily equivalent to the Old Testament scriptures, but here probably to be taken in the sense of elementary Christian instruction. That the failure of the readers lies here is further shown by 6:1. **Become such as have need.** Better, *come to require*. **Of milk.** The food of infants, representative of their spiritual and intellectual immaturity. Cf. 1 Cor. 3:2. The writer has spoken of them above as in their second childhood; here they appear as infants in good earnest. **And.** Not part of the text, and so to be omitted. **Solid food.** Such as the writer desires to give them. The readers are taxed with having no stomach for lofty, exacting Christian thought, having habituated themselves to the simplest, easiest notions only.

13. **Without experience.** The taking of milk marks one as a babe, and so of course inexperienced. **The word of righteousness.** A general expression, *discourse on righteousness*, but with especial reference to *Christian teaching*. **Babe.** Not, as in Jesus' teaching, a synonym for simplicity and receptiveness, but as in Paul, for ignorance and inexperience.

14. This picture of experienced and discriminating maturity is designed to rouse the readers to throw off their infantile habit of mind and rise into the thought and stature of Christian manhood. **Exercised to discern.** Cf. the reproof given the disciples by Jesus, for their unreadiness to practise discernment in the matter of ceremonial cleanness, Mk. 7:18.

1. **Wherefore.** *I.e., since it is high time the readers were having the solid food, for which they are old enough, and for which they must show themselves mature enough.* **Cease.** Better, *leave alone*.

- ples of °Christ, and °press on unto ¹perfection; not laying again °a foundation of repentance from dead works,
2. and of faith toward God, ² of the teaching of ^{°3} baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of °resurrection of the
3. dead, and of eternal judgment. And °this will we do,
4. °if God permit. °For as touching those who were once

¹ Or, *full growth*

² Some ancient authorities read, even *the teaching of*.

³ Or, *washings*

In spite of the unfortunate immaturity of his readers, the writer declines to take up with them the mere elements of Christian faith. **Christ.** Better, *the Christ*. **Press on unto perfection.** Rather, *move on toward maturity, i.e.,* such discourse as becomes the full-grown. **A foundation;** the writer shows what he means by the rudiments of Christian teaching, in the three groups that follow: repentance and faith, baptism and laying on of hands, resurrection and judgment. **Dead works** can hardly refer to former obedience to Jewish law, but rather suggests former wrong doing, now repented of. Repentance and faith are often placed together in the New Testament as the basis of Christian life; cf. Mk. 1 : 15, etc.

2. **Baptisms, . . . laying on of hands.** The natural sequels of repentance and faith, since in baptism the convert made profession of his faith, and through the laying on of hands received the gift of the Spirit. Cf. Acts 2 : 38; 8 : 12, 17, etc. **Resurrection . . . judgment.** The believer's outlook, under which he was to live (Davidson). These elements constituted the subject of the evangelistic as distinct from the edifying preaching. The outline comports altogether better with Gentile than with Jewish recipients.

3. **This will we do.** The writer is in these three verses primarily stating his own present intention of proceeding with a difficult teaching, despite their unreadiness for it; but his underlying purpose is to stimulate his readers to attend and accept it. **If God permit.** Taken in connection with what follows, these words suggest the writer's apprehensiveness that possibly for some of his readers his admonition may already be too late; they may have fallen away, vs. 6, or at least grown so dull and senile as to be incapable of being roused to Christian manhood. The words give a touch of added solemnity to the warning that follows.

The fearful consequences of apostasy, 6:4-8.

4. **For.** In explanation of the apprehension suggested in the last words; or, as others hold, of the writer's intention to neglect mere foundation matters, since any who had given them up would

- °enlightened ¹ and °tasted of °the heavenly gift, and °were
 5. made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and ² tasted °the
 good word of God, and the °powers of the age to come,
 6. and *then* °fell away, it is °impossible to renew them again
 unto repentance; ³ seeing they crucify to themselves the
 Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.
 7. For the land which hath drunk the rain that cometh oft
 upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them for whose
 8. sake it is also tilled, receiveth blessing from God: but if

Gen. 1 : 11,
12

¹ Or, *having both tasted of . . . and being made . . . and having tasted etc.* ² Or, *tasted the word of God that it is good* ³ Or, *the while*

be indifferent to a new presentation of them. **Enlightened.** Received illumination; often used of the initial Christian experience; cf. John 1:9; Eph. 1:18; and Heb. 10:32. Justin Martyr, ca. 150 A.D., connects it with baptism, *Apol.* 61, which he calls illumination. **Tasted of.** Better, *tasted*. **The heavenly gift.** Forgiveness of sins, or, possibly, the gift of the Spirit, like the following. **Were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.** *I.e.*, had received the Spirit. The emphasis is here upon the initial experiences of the Christian, the learning of the first principles of Christ.

5. **The good word of God.** The gospel, or perhaps the promises in general. **Powers of the age to come.** The mighty works everywhere represented as attending the early acceptance of the gospel are probably meant. These are viewed as a foretaste of the state of things to be enjoyed in the coming Messianic Age.

6. **Fell away.** A reference to persons belonging to the church addressed who have actually apostatized is very probable here. The description of these lapsed persons strongly suggests a time of persecution, such as that under Nero or Domitian. **Impossible to renew them.** The warning against apostasy is put in the sternest, most uncompromising form. If, after all the blessed and delightful experiences of Christian faith, men fall away, their case is hopeless, and it is vain to pursue them with the old preaching of first principles. **Seeing they crucify . . . afresh.** That is, their renewal is impossible because they practically recrucify Jesus, and hold him up to ridicule and disgrace. Apostasy implies practical assent to the rejection and murder of Jesus.

7, 8. This dreadful sentence upon the lapsed is supported by an analogy from nature presented in a little parable. Well-watered land which is fruitful is blessed, but well-watered land which pro-

it beareth thorns and thistles, it is rejected and nigh unto a curse; °whose end is to be burned. Gen. 3 : 17, 18

9. °But, °beloved, we are persuaded °better things of you, and things that °¹accompany salvation, °though
10. we thus speak: °for God is °not unrighteous °to forget °your work and the love which ye shewed °toward his name, in that ye °ministered unto the saints, and

¹ Or, *are near to*: SVM *belong to*

duces only thorns and thistles is cursed and fit only to be burned over. **Whose end.** Better, *and its end*. While the parable is left uninterpreted, its application is plain.

Encouragement in view of the readers' good works and God's oath-attested promises, 6 : 9-20.

9. **But.** The tone changes to mildness and commendation, and a more hopeful view of the readers' condition is taken. The writer will not believe that any of them are near the apostasy he has so terribly depicted. **Beloved.** Used in this place only in the epistle, as though in reaction from the preceding rebuke and menace. **Better things.** Than the barrenness and apostasy just described. **Accompany.** Better, *belong to*. **Though we thus speak.** The writer feels that in his anxiety to warn the readers most effectively, he has gone further than he intended, and than their condition justified. He adopts therefore a conciliatory, almost apologetic tone.

10. **For.** He is encouraged to this belief by the recollection of their Christian helpfulness and love, still displayed as of old. **Not unrighteous.** A strong way of declaring God's satisfaction in such work. **To forget.** Their service of love is such as God delights to remember, and evidences their salvation. **Your work.** Spiritually immature as the readers are, they have known hard and faithful Christian service. **Toward his name.** *I.e.*, toward those who bear his name. **Ministered unto the saints.** This recalls Paul's interest in collections for the poor saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8 : 4, etc.), and sufficiently distinguishes the readers from any Palestinian congregation. The service here commended is probably a larger work, of Christian helpfulness to brethren in poverty, sickness, prison, or slavery, in their own district or beyond it. The readers have an enviable record in this regard. No church of the first century had greater opportunity for such service than the Roman church, or responded more nobly to it. Cf. Acts 28 : 15.

11. still do minister. And we desire that each one of you may shew ^othe same diligence ^ounto the ¹fulness
12. of hope ^oeven to the end; that ye be not ^osluggish, but ^oimitators of them who through ^ofaith and ^opatience ^oinherit ^othe promises.
13. ^oFor when God ^omade promise to Abraham, since he could swear by none greater, ^ohe sware ^oby him-
- Gen. 22 : 17 14. self, saying, Surely ^oblessing I will bless thee, and

¹ Or, full assurance

11. **The same diligence** : as was shown in their work and love. **Unto the fulness of hope.** *I.e.*, to keep their hope of the coming Messianic kingdom (Rom. 13 : 11) strong and confident. **Even to the end.** Here appears again the writer's underlying fear that they may tire out and give up the Christian struggle before the return of Christ.

12. **Sluggish.** It is the inner spirit of hope and faith that the writer is seeking to quicken. **Imitators of them who through faith.** Cf. 13 : 7, *Imitate their faith.* A notable list of such heroes is given in ch. 11, and a conspicuous pattern of such faith, Abraham, is presented in the next verse. **Faith.** Not, as in 6 : 1, that early faith which introduces one into the kingdom of God, but that attitude of trust and dependence which enables one to live in the present enjoyment of the heavenly world. In Hebrews "Faith denotes a faculty of the human mind whereby it can make the future as if it were present, and the unseen as if it were visible" (Bruce). **Patience.** *I.e.*, in awaiting the fulfilment of the divine promises. **Inherit the promises.** This expression has two forces : to witness and enjoy the ultimate actual fulfilment of a promise, and to have such participation in constant and certain prospect. The latter is the sense here, and *who . . . inherit the promises* may be rendered, *who are heirs of the promises.* **The promises.** Those of the Old Testament, as summed up in the salvation wrought by Christ and now on its way to full accomplishment.

13. **For.** In support of the exhortation to hope, vs. 11, God's convincing endorsement of the promises is recalled. **Made promise to Abraham.** This great leading promise to Abraham is taken as representative of God's attitude toward the promises in general. **He sware.** This attestation of the promises by oath should encourage hope in them. **By himself.** Cf. Gen. 22 : 16, *By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah.*

14. **Blessing I will bless.** A Hebraism meaning *I will greatly*

15. ^omultiplying I will multiply thee. And thus, ^ohaving
 16. patiently endured, he ^oobtained the promise. ^oFor
 men swear by the greater: and in every dispute of
 17. theirs ^othe oath is final for confirmation. ^oWherein
 God, ^obeing minded to shew more abundantly unto
 the heirs of the promise the ^oimmutability of his
 18. ^ocounsel, ^{oi}interposed with an oath: that ^oby two
 immutable things, in which it is impossible for God
 to lie, ^owe may have a strong encouragement, ^owho
 have fled for refuge ^oto lay hold of the hope set

¹ Gr. *mediated*.

bless. Multiplying, etc. Or, *I will greatly multiply*. The promise made to Abraham after his supreme exhibition of faith in the offering of Isaac.

15. **Having patiently endured.** It is as a pattern of such perseverance in faith that Abraham is introduced here. **Obtained the promise.** Abraham, after a life of faith, actually witnessed the beginning of the fulfilment of this promise, in the birth of his grandsons Jacob and Esau. Gen. 21 : 5; 25 : 7, 26.

16. **For.** In explanation of vs. 13, *He could swear by none greater. The oath is final.* The oath puts the statement it confirms beyond dispute.

17. **Wherein.** Rather, *Therefore.* **Being minded.** Wishing, desiring. **Immutability.** *Unalterableness.* **Counsel.** *Purpose*, design of salvation. **Interposed.** Came between himself and Abraham, as it were, in his condescension swearing, like a mere man, by himself, as God. It is God's condescension that is here emphasized, as a moral argument for faith in his promises. If he has thus condescended in attesting his promises, how certain we may be of their fulfilment.

18. **By two immutable things.** God's promise and his oath. God's moral nature guarantees his promise as unchangeable. His condescension in deigning to attest his promise with his oath makes his word no surer, but does add to the grounds of faith by showing God's deep and exceeding interest in his promise and its acceptance, since he has been pleased to go to the length of swearing to it. **We may have a strong encouragement.** To be connected directly with to lay hold of the hope set before us. The purpose of

19. before us; ° which we have as °an anchor of the soul, *a hope* both °sure and stedfast and °entering
- Lev. 16 : 2, 12 20. into that which is within °the veil; °whither °as a forerunner Jesus entered for us, having become a high priest °for ever °after the order of °Melchizedek.
- Ps. 110 : 4

this act of condescension was to encourage faith in the promises. **Who have fled for refuge.** Used absolutely; *We refugees.* Christian believers.

19. **Which.** *Sc.* hope. **An anchor.** Holding the soul safely and steadily in times of storm, as an anchor holds a ship at its moorings. **Sure and stedfast.** Taken by most interpreters with *anchor*, although the connection with *hope*, as in the text, is quite as likely. **Entering.** To connect this, as most interpreters do, with the anchor seems grotesque, and hence the preceding adjectives *sure and stedfast* are probably to be taken with *hope*, as in the text. The Christian hope enters into the place within the veil, the Most Holy place, the very presence of God, *i.e.*, heaven, whither he went after his resurrection. With this statement the writer recalls the thought to the sanctuary and the priest who ministers there, last mentioned in 5 : 10. **The veil.** The curtain which separated the Most Holy place from the Holy place, in the tabernacle and in the temple. In the analogy the Holy place would mean heaven and the veil all that which separates the spiritual from the sensuous world.

20. **Whither.** Into the presence of God. **As a forerunner.** The bold application of this term to Jesus is a notable element in this epistle, and carries with it the most important implications, especially in connection with the presentation of Jesus as high priest, since it shows that he enters the divine presence not as a substitute for his brethren, but as their forerunner. They are themselves to follow into that very presence. **A high priest . . . after . . . Melchizedek.** As in 5 : 10. The writer now returns to the argument there interrupted by his complaint of the dulness and immaturity of his readers. The retransition from his digression, 5 : 11-6 : 20, to his argument is effected with his usual skill, the mention of the veil and the high priest recalling the thought to the last point reached in the argument. The remarkable digression, in addition to its primary purpose, has value as relieving the course of the argument, which otherwise might have seemed to wane in interest because of its length and difficulty. It must be remembered, however, that the epistle is written for practical purposes, and the argument thus exists for the admonition, not the admonition for the argument. **For ever.** As in the prophecy, 5 : 6. The high priesthood of Christ is not temporary, like Aaron's, but is for all time.

4. *The Melchizedek Priesthood of Jesus, 7: 1-28.*

7. °For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him, to whom also Abraham divided a tenth part of all (being first, by °interpretation, °King of righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is, °King of peace; °without father, without mother, without genealogy, having
- Gen. 14 : 17-20
- Gen. 14 : 18

The priestly dignity of Melchizedek, 7: 1-10.

1. **For this Melchizedek.** The writer resumes at length the discussion of the Melchizedek high priesthood of Christ, which he has already touched upon in 2 : 17; 3 : 1; 4 : 14, and entered upon in 5 : 1-10. These verses present all that is said of Melchizedek in Genesis, in language drawn from Gen. 14 : 17-20. The only other Old Testament reference to him is Ps. 110 : 4, which constitutes the text for this whole discussion. He is not mentioned in the New Testament except in Hebrews, nor in the Apostolic Fathers. Philo, however, says something of him, and in a way not wholly unlike that of the writer. Thus, "God made Melchizedek the king of peace, that is, of Salem, for that is the interpretation of this name, his own high priest," etc., *On Allegories of the Sacred Laws*, ch. 25. See appended Note, p. 125.

2. **Interpretation.** *I.e., translation.* **King of righteousness.** So the Hebrew name may be translated. **King of peace.** In seeking further to fill in the vague outlines of the figure of this ancient priest-king, the writer translates not only his name but the name of his city, Salem, perhaps Jerusalem (Ps. 76 : 2), but more probably Saleim near Scythopolis (John 3 : 23). Salem may be translated peaceful. Cf. Philo, "Melchizedek, the king of peace . . . a just king," *On Allegories of the Sacred Laws*, 25. It is not to Philo, however, but to Ps. 110 : 4 that the writer is indebted. In translating these names the writer goes beyond the LXX, which of course simply transfers them into Greek letters. These suggestions of righteousness and peacefulness, as well as the royal dignity of Melchizedek, cast a certain radiance about his figure very much to the writer's purpose.

3. **Without father.** The utter detachment of the figure of Melchizedek, his ancestry being altogether unknown, presents a contrast to ordinary hereditary priesthoods. The writer here uses the silence of the Old Testament as argument, as does Philo at times. He

- °neither beginning of days nor end of life, but °made like unto the Son of God), abideth a priest continually.
- Ps. 110 : 4
4. Now consider °how great this man was, unto whom Abraham, °the patriarch, °gave a tenth out of the
- Gen. 14 : 20
5. chief spoils. And they indeed °of the sons of Levi that receive the priest's office have commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is °of their brethren, though these have come out of the
6. loins of Abraham: but he whose °genealogy is not counted from them hath taken tithes of Abraham, and hath
- Gen. 14 : 19

would have his readers understand that here is a priest of God, so recognized by the patriarch Abraham, who, as a recognition of his superiority, paid him tithes out of his spoils, who owes his priesthood not to his descent but to the worth of his own personality. **Neither beginning of days nor end of life.** As no mention is made in history of the birth or death of Melchizedek, he appears, as far as the narrative goes, as a deathless figure, a priest forever, as the writer understands the psalmist to mean. Here again the writer argues from the silence of the Old Testament, but more especially he is under the influence of the psalmist, whose words (Ps. 110 : 4) underlie this whole argument. **Made like unto the Son of God.** The hints of royalty, peace, righteousness, originality, and eternity thus attaching to the figure of Melchizedek, combine to make a figure like to no one but the Son of God.

4. **How great.** The greatness of the priest-king Melchizedek is here dwelt upon, particularly as compared with the Levitic priesthood, to show the dignity and worth of the non-Aaronic priestly order to which the psalmist referred the Messiah. **The patriarch.** Suggesting the greatness and dignity of Abraham, as father of tribes and a hero of old. **Gave a tenth.** Thus acknowledging the superior priestly dignity of him to whom he gave this tithe. The giving of the tenth was virtual admission of the priestly office of Melchizedek.

5. **Of the sons of Levi.** The Levitic priests who take tithes of their brethren are introduced by way of contrast with Melchizedek, to show the superior dignity of his priesthood and to anticipate the possible objection that the Levitic was the original regular divinely ordained priesthood. **Of their brethren.** Men descended, like themselves, from Abraham.

6. **Genealogy is not counted.** Though unconnected with the line of Aaron, Melchizedek received tithes, and from one greater than

7. °blessed him that hath the promises. But without
8. any dispute °the less is blessed of the better. And °here °men that die receive tithes; but °there one,
9. of whom it is °witnessed that he liveth. And, °so to say, °through Abraham even Levi, who receiveth
10. tithes, hath paid tithes; for he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him.
11. °Now if there was °perfection through the Levitical priesthood (°for under it hath the people received the

the Levites themselves, Abraham, their ancestor, the friend of God, the receiver of the promises, from which all Israel's privilege ultimately sprang. This point is important for the argument as to the priesthood of Jesus, who was not of Levitical descent, and might thus be thought to have no claim to priestly office. As a Melchizedek priest, however, he is shown to belong to an earlier, nobler order, acknowledged as true by the great patriarch himself. **Blessed him.** Abraham, great as he was, acknowledged the superiority of Melchizedek, not only by paying him tithes, but by accepting his blessing.

7. **The less is blessed of the better.** Abraham therefore admitted inferiority to Melchizedek in accepting his blessing. The greatness of Melchizedek is thus established.

8. **Here.** In the case of the Levitical priesthood. **Men that die.** Mortal men, who die and transmit their priestly office to others. **There.** In the case of Melchizedek. **Witnessed that he liveth.** Not expressly in scripture, but implicitly, in the silence of the Old Testament as to his death. As in vs. 3, the silence of the Old Testament is treated as prophetically significant. Melchizedek's priesthood is not resigned to another but remains permanently his.

9. **So to say.** As if in apology for the suggestion. **Through Abraham even Levi.** Abraham is here conceived as an embodiment and representative of his posterity, in a way not unnatural to the Jewish mind, especially with the imaginative and poetic bent of the writer. The argument exhibits the Melchizedek priesthood as superior to the Aaronic in originality, in dignity, and in enduring quality.

The Messianic Priesthood of Melchizedek's order, proclaimed by the Psalmist, is realized in Jesus, and altogether excels the Aaronic Priesthood, superseding the Old Law and the Old Covenant, 7 : 11-25.

11. **Now if.** Continuing the argument by suggesting a condition contrary to fact. **Perfection.** In the sense of perfecting, making perfect. The Levitical priesthood has not fully succeeded in bring-

Ps. 110 : 4

- law), what further need *was there* that °another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and °not
 12. be reckoned after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood °being changed, there is made of necessity
 13. °a change also ¹ of the law. For °he of whom these things are said ² belongeth to °another tribe, from which no man hath °given attendance at the altar.
 14. For it is evident that our Lord hath °sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses spake °nothing concerning priests. And *what we say* is °yet more abundantly

¹ Or, of law ² Gr. hath partaken of. See ch. ii. 14.

ing men to God, for the psalmist prophetically proposes another priesthood. **For under it.** The Levitical priesthood is recognized as fundamental in Judaism, and underlying its legal system. **Another priest.** The Messianic priest who has been proclaimed by the psalmist. **Not . . . after the order of Aaron.** The psalmist's words practically supersede the Aaronic priesthood, and for no other possible reason than that it had proven inadequate to make perfect. The institution of the new order implies the inadequacy of the old Aaronic order.

12. **Being changed.** By the psalmist's words to the Messianic priest. **A change also of the law.** Modification of the fundamental matter in the Law, the priesthood, prepares us for other changes in it, such as the transference of the priesthood from Levi to Judah. The writer is comparing Judaism and Christianity in terms of priesthood. Each is essentially a priesthood, Judaism a transient Levitical order, of proven inadequacy, Christianity a Melchizedek priesthood, enduring and effectual.

13. **He of whom.** Jesus, of whom, as Messiah, the psalmist prophetically spoke. **Another tribe.** Judah, as in vs. 14. **Given attendance.** Officiated as priest.

14. **Sprung out of Judah.** The writer evidently knows of Jesus' Davidic descent, which is reflected in the earliest Christian belief, Rom. 1 : 3; Mark 10 : 47, 48. **Nothing concerning priests.** A priest from Judah is, from the point of view of Moses' law, an innovation. The oracle from Ps. 110 thus implies and indeed establishes the inadequacy of the old priesthood, and invalidates the Law at an essential point.

15. **Yet more abundantly evident.** The superiority of the

dantly evident, if after °the likeness of Melchizedek
 16. there ariseth °another priest, who °hath been made,
 not °after the law of a carnal commandment, but after
 17. °the power of an ¹endless life: for °it is witnessed
 of him,

Thou art a priest for ever

Ps. 110 : 4

After the order of Melchizedek.

18. °For °there is °a disannulling of a foregoing command-
 ment °because of its weakness and unprofitableness
 19. (°for the law made nothing perfect), and °a bringing

¹ Gr. *indissoluble*.

Messianic priesthood is shown by its enduring character, contrasting with the transient nature of the old. **The likeness of Melchizedek.** As described in vss. 1-3. **Another priest.** Jesus.

16. **Hath been made.** Lit., *has become, i.e., become priest.* **After the law of a carnal commandment.** Better, *By law of fleshly, i.e., physical, statute.* The Levitical priest took office as eldest son of a priestly father, of proper physical descent from Levi through Aaron, and free from physical defect. His priesthood was thus liable, like all things physical, to dissolution, and hence transient. **The power of an endless life.** Or, *By power of indissoluble life.* In this phrase "power" is in contrast to "law," above, "indissoluble," to "physical," and "life" to "statute." The superiority of the Messianic priestly appointment is everywhere seen. It is by virtue of the might of enduring life. He is high priest forever, while the Levitical priesthood by its very transitoriness is again convicted of inferiority and inadequacy. ✓

17. **It is witnessed.** The testimony of the psalm which is at the bottom of this whole argument, is again quoted, the emphasis being on the words *For ever*. The Messianic priest has been declared priest for ever. His is the enduring and final priesthood.

18. **For.** In support of this interpretation of the oracle just quoted. **There is.** Better, *takes place, i.e.,* in this prophetic utterance of the psalmist. **A disannulling,** etc. Better, *An abrogation of a previous statute, viz.,* that ordaining an Aaronic priesthood. **Because of its weakness,** etc. The old priesthood, as maintained above, failed to perfect men, in bringing them near to God. Cf. vs. 11.

19. **For.** This parenthesis serves to buttress the bold statement that the priesthood statute was weak and disadvantageous, by ex-

in thereupon of °a better hope, through which °we
 20. draw nigh unto God. °And inasmuch as *it is* not
 21. without the taking of an oath (for °they indeed have
 been made priests without an oath; °but he °with an
 oath ¹ by him that saith ² of him,

Ps. 110 : 4

The Lord sware and °will not repent himself,
 Thou art a priest for ever);

22. by so much also hath Jesus become the °surety of °a
 23. better ³ covenant. °And they indeed have been made

¹ Or, *through* ² Or, *unto* ³ Or, *testament*

tending the criticism to the whole law, which the writer views as provisional, accommodated, and typical. **A bringing in thereupon.** The psalmist's prophecy has two implications: the abrogation of the old, imperfect statute, and the introduction and substitution of a new and better hope. **A better hope.** Than was conferred by Judaism. This thought of the better hope and covenant dominates the later part of the epistle. **We draw nigh unto God.** In this affirmation is involved the conclusion of the writer's argument for Christ as priest and forerunner, through whom we obtain access to the very presence of God. The great salvation is a better hope, through which we draw near to God. This is the high point of the epistle.

20. **And inasmuch.** Correlative with *By so much*, vs. 22. Vs. 21 is parenthetical. That Christ's priesthood and covenant are better than the old is shown by the fact that they are solemnly oath-attested: *The Lord hath sworn and he will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever.* The new covenant is superior to the old in this quality of being oath-attested, and is as far superior as that implies.

21. **They indeed.** The Levitical priests. **But he.** The Messianic priest. **With an oath.** The appointment must be of an extraordinarily solemn and momentous kind to be so weightily attested. The writer thus lays hold of every element in the prophetic oracle to point the superiority of the Messianic priest over the Levitical. The former is ideal, perfect, eternal, and oath-attested. **Will not repent.** The new priesthood is therefore unalterable.

22. **Surety.** Guarantor. **A better covenant.** The writer's verdict of inferiority, passed first upon the old priesthood, has extended to the old Law and now at length to the old covenant. The covenant for which Jesus is surety is a better one, as his oath-attested priesthood shows.

23. A final point of superiority for the Messianic priest; he is

- priests many in number, because that by death they
24. are hindered from °continuing: °but he, because he °abideth °for ever, ¹hath his priesthood ²unchangeable.
25. °Wherefore also he is able to save ³to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he °ever liveth to °make intercession for them.
26. For such a high priest °became us, °holy, °guileless, °undefiled, °separated from sinners, and °made higher

¹ Or, *hath a priesthood that doth not pass to another* ² Or, *inviolable* ³ Gr. *completely*.

one, not many. **And they indeed.** The Levitical priests. We may render, *They in numbers have become priests*. In Judaism one priest followed another, and thus the high priesthood was a disjointed thing, without real unity or continuity. **Continuing.** That is, remaining priests.

24. **But he.** Christ, the Messianic priest. **Abideth.** Remains priest. **For ever.** As declared in the psalm. **Unchangeable.** Rather, *untransferable*. As he continues priest forever, he never has to give way to a successor, and his priestly office never passes to another. To the other superiorities of the Messianic priest must therefore be added the untransferableness of his office.

25. **Wherefore.** Such a priestly office as has been described, especially as being eternal and untransferable, enables its possessor to give the great salvation already spoken of, 2 : 3. **To the uttermost.** Utterly, absolutely, in all respects. Here is that completing, perfecting quality which was wanting in the Levitical system and the Law. **Ever liveth.** His eternal existence carries with it continual priestly service. **Make intercession.** This ever-ready intercession constitutes Christ's eternal priestly service, and reveals its complete and perfect character.

The supreme efficacy and dignity of Christ's priesthood, 7 : 26-28.

26. A triumphant summary of the greatness of the ideal Messianic priest. **Became us.** Our needs demanded such a high priest. **Holy.** In his relation to God, *i.e.*, Godly. **Guileless.** In his relation to men, toward whom he is without offence. **Undefiled.** And hence unobjectionable as priest. **Separated.** Better, *removed, i.e.*, in his heavenly exaltation, far from the soiling presence of the sinful. **Made higher.** Or, *Become higher*, with reference to his exaltation as Son, 1 : 3, to God's right hand, where, in the heavenly sanctuary,

27. than the heavens; who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the *sins* of the people: for this he did
28. once for all, when he offered up himself. For the law appointeth men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, *appointeth* a Son, perfected for evermore.

Ps. 110 : 4;
2 : 7

his priestly intercession is direct and continual. From every point of view he proves the perfect, ideal high priest.

27. **Needeth not.** Since he is holy, guileless, undefiled, and removed from sinners to the presence of God. **Daily, like those high priests.** It is not strictly true that the Levitical high priest had daily to offer sacrifice, first for his own sins and then for the people's. That was the usage of the Day of Atonement, once a year. The writer here blends that high priestly ministration with the daily priestly service. **For his own sins.** The repetition of the old offering was due in part to the imperfection of the priests who offered it; hence with the disappearance of the imperfection, the repetition, too, may be expected to vanish. **For the sins of the people.** Yet it is only in part that it is due to priestly imperfection, for an offering is made for the people too. Without a recurring offering, how are their sins to be atoned for? Such an atonement, the writer replies, he made once for all, when he offered up himself. In this clause the writer discloses the inmost heart of Christ's priestly service, his sacrifice of himself, in his life of devotion on earth, and most signally in his death on the cross. His ideal priesthood culminates in this tremendous fact. For himself he has no need to offer; and for the people he has made the supreme offering in dying for them.

28. The contrast between the two priesthoods is finally and convincingly pointed. On the one hand, the Law, with its appointment of men; on the other, the oath-attested oracle, ordaining a Son; on the one hand, beings of infirmity; on the other, one perfected for evermore, *i.e.*, ideally fitted by character and elevation for priestly service. In these last elements, the Messianic priesthood has clearly transcended its Melchizedek prototype.

IV. CHRIST'S HIGH PRIESTLY SERVICE, CARRYING
 WITH IT THE NEW COVENANT, IS INFINITELY
 BETTER THAN THEIRS (WHICH WAS BUT THE
 SHADOW), IN ITS HEAVENLY SANCTUARY,
 ITS SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF, AND ITS
 ETERNAL EFFICACY, 8 : 1-10 : 39

1. *The New Priesthood implies the New and Better Cove-* 8 : 1
nant, 8 : 1-13.

8. ¹Now ²in the things which we are saying °the chief
 point *is this*: We have °such a high priest, °who sat Ps. 110: 4
 down °on the right hand of °the throne of the Majesty
 2. °in the heavens, °a minister of ³the sanctuary, and of
 °the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

¹ Or, *Now to sum up what we are saying: We have etc.* ² Gr. *upon.* ³ Or, *holy things*

1. **The chief point.** Better, *Now to crown what we are saying* (Rendall). **Such a high priest.** As we needed and as has been described. **Who sat down.** Better, *And he has taken his seat.* **In the heavens** should be connected with this clause, not with *Majesty*. **On the right hand of the throne of the Majesty**, cf. 1 : 3. This picture of the exalted station of the Messianic priest prepares the way for the writer's next thought, the immeasurable superiority of his priestly ministry to that of Aaron.

2. **A minister.** Better, *as minister*; to be connected with *He has taken his seat*, vs. 1. **The true tabernacle.** Throughout the epistle the reference is always to the Tent of Meeting described in Ex. 25-27, never the Temple of Jerusalem. The true Tent, however, means not the Tent of Meeting, but the heavenly pattern of it shown to Moses in the Mount, Ex. 25 : 9, 40, and hence described here as that *which the Lord pitched, not man*. That is, Christ ministers in that original, archetypal, heavenly sanctuary, of which the Tent of Meeting was a rude copy or even shadow (vs. 5).

3. For °every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that this *high*
4. *priest* also °have somewhat to offer. Now if he were °on earth, he °would not be a priest at all, °seeing there are those who offer the gifts °according to the law;
5. who serve *that which* is a °copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses is warned *of God* when he is about to ¹ make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern
6. that was shewed thee in the mount. But now hath he

Ex. 25 : 40

¹ Or, *complete*

3. **Every high priest.** Since the presenting of offerings invariably characterizes the high priestly office, the heavenly high priest must have such a function. **Have somewhat to offer.** Attention is recalled to the sacrifice which Christ offers, already briefly suggested (7 : 27b), but not yet fully grasped by the readers, to whom it was doubtless an altogether novel idea. The high priest of the heavenly sanctuary must make some offering there; what that offering is the writer does not here say.

4. It is no earthly offering, however, since he is no earthly priest. **On earth.** Whereas the ideal priest ministers in heaven. **Would not be a priest.** For he belongs not to the earthly Aaronic order, but to the heavenly Messianic priesthood. **Seeing there are those.** He is not simply another earthly priest, with a similar offering and ministry; of such there are enough. His sphere and task are different. **According to the law.** The legally specified offerings of the Tent of Meeting are not to be expected from the heavenly priest.

5. **Copy and shadow.** The real sanctuary and service are in heaven. Philo has a similar view of heavenly archetypes and earthly shadow-copies. The basis for this favorite Alexandrian idea was found in the words of Jehovah, Ex. 25 : 40.

6. Whatever the new ministry is, it may be expected to surpass the old as much as the new covenant already mentioned surpasses the old and the attendant promises the promises underlying the old. The better covenant, with its loftier promises, implies some better service for the high priest who is its mediator, *i.e.*, establishes it. **Mediator.** Christ has been mentioned above as the surety of this better covenant, 7 : 22. He is now called its mediator, *i.e.*, the agent of its establishment (Bruce).

- obtained a ministry the more excellent,¹ by how much also he is the °mediator of a better² covenant which
 7. hath been enacted upon better promises. °For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then would no place
 8. have been sought for a second. For³ finding fault °with them, °he saith,

Jer. 31 : 31-34

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,

That °I will⁴ make a new² covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;

9. °Not according to the² covenant that I made with their fathers

In the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt;

°For they continued not in my² covenant,

And I °regarded them not, saith the Lord.

¹ SV by so much as he is also, etc.

² Or, testament

³ SVM Some ancient authorities read, *finding fault with it, he saith unto them, etc.*

⁴ Gr. *accomplish*

7. **For.** Jeremiah's prophecy of a new covenant implies the failure of the old, just as the psalmist's announcement of the Messianic priesthood implies the defectiveness and prospective abrogation of the old priesthood. The writer's bold assertion of the inferiority of the old covenant is thus supported by the Old Testament itself.

8. **With them.** The blame did primarily attach to the people, but involved the covenant as well, since it had failed to keep them faithful to God. **He saith.** This oracle, the longest quotation from the Old Testament found in the New, presents the prophetic picture of a new dispensation, characterized by spiritual renewal and forgiveness of sin, in place of the Mosaic system of statute and ritual, with its tendency to sunder true inward righteousness from religion. The prophecy belongs probably to the time of the siege and capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. **I will make.** Better, *conclude*.

9. **Not according to.** The oracle distinctly states that the new covenant is to be unlike the old, and in this the writer finds a reflection upon the old. **For they continued not.** The failure was in part the people's; in part it was due to the unsuitability of the cove-

10. For this is the ¹ covenant that ² I will make with the house of Israel
 After those days, saith the Lord;
 I will put my laws ^ointo their mind,
 And on their heart also ^owill I write them:
 And I will be ^oto them a God,
 And they shall be to me a people:
11. And ^othey shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen,
 And every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord:
 For all shall know me,
^oFrom the least to the greatest of them.
12. ^oFor I will be merciful to their iniquities,
 And their sins will I remember no more.

¹ Or, *testament* ² Gr. *I will covenant.*

nant to their needs. **Regarded them not.** The covenant thus failed to hold God and his people together.

10. The better promises claimed in vs. 6 constitute the further part of the prophetic oracle. The first is the inward law. **Into their mind.** Inward spiritual law is to take the place of external formal statute. **Will I write them.** Of old they were written on the tables of stone, but in the days to come these fundamental principles of morality and religion will color the very sources of man's thought and impulse. **To them a God . . . to me a people.** For the new covenant is promised just that efficacy which the old had failed to realize.

11. **They shall not teach.** The minute and often non-moral statutes of the old Law were matters of precise technical information, and might be transgressed in all innocence and righteous intention, so that godly minded men had to be painfully taught by priest and scribe the "Knowledge of Jehovah." All this trivial and indifferent legislation is, the writer understands, to be done away. **From the least to the greatest.** The law of God being reduced to those great moral terms comprehended in the Decalogue, unencumbered with the detail of ritual and ceremonial, and implanted in the heart, will be spontaneously grasped by all righteous-minded men, however unprivileged or unlettered.

12. The second promise is the forgiveness of sin. **For.** Intro-

13. In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away.

2. *The Better Sanctuary, Sacrifice, and Ministry*, 9 : 1-28.

9. Now even the first *covenant* had ordinances of divine service, and its sanctuary, *a sanctuary* °of this world.
2. For there was °a tabernacle prepared, °the first, wherein ¹ were the °candlestick, and °the table, and ² the shewbread; which is called the Holy place. And after °the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the
4. Holy of holies; having a golden ³censer, and °the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold,

¹ Or, are ² Gr. *the setting forth of the loaves.* ³ SV altar of incense

ducing the ground of the promise of the inward law just given. Freedom from the consciousness of sin underlies and promotes knowledge of God and access to him. God will no longer permit men's sins to hinder this knowledge and approach.

The Christian sanctuary infinitely excels the old, 9 : 1-10.

1. In preparation for the exposition of the Messianic priest's ministry, the old priestly ministry is described. The discussion thus connects itself with the more excellent ministry of 8 : 6. **Of this world** is probably to be taken predicatively with both *ordinances* and *sanctuary*.

2. **A tabernacle.** Used in general, of the whole Tent of Meeting. **The first.** Used of the first or fore part of the Tent, the Holy place. The writer speaks of it as the first tent. He proceeds to describe its furniture, as in Ex. 25, 26, 37, 39, 40. **Candlestick.** As in Ex. 25 : 31-40; 37 : 17-24. **The table, and the shewbread.** As in Ex. 25 : 23-30; 37 : 10-16. The location of these objects in the Holy place is in accordance with Ex. 40 : 22-24.

3. **The second veil.** The veil strictly so called. It is here called the second veil, because another veil or curtain hung before the Holy place, and had first to be lifted in entering the Tent.

4. **Censer.** Better, *altar of incense*, which played an important part in the ritual of the Day of Atonement, Ex. 30 : 10; Lev. 16 : 18-20. It is true this was placed in the Holy place, according to

- wherein ¹ was a °golden pot holding the manna, and °Aaron's rod that budded, and °the tables of the covenant; and above it °cherubim of glory overshadowing ² the mercy-seat; of which things we cannot now speak severally. Now these things having been thus °prepared, the priests go in °continually into °the first 7. tabernacle, accomplishing the services; but °into the second the high priest alone, once in the year, not without blood, which he °offereth for himself, and for

¹ Or, is ² Gr. *the propitiatory*.

Ex. 30:6; 40:26. But it is incredible that this most important object should have been omitted by the writer, and no such censure as the other interpretation demands is known to have formed part of these furnishings. Philo has a similar understanding as to the place of the incense altar, and Ex. 40:5 certainly gives some color to his view: *Thou shalt set the golden altar for incense before the ark of the testimony*. On the other hand, the word *having* has suggested that the writer means to point out that the incense altar, though appertaining to the ritual of the inmost sanctuary, and standing at the very door of it, was yet cut off from it by the interposed veil. **The ark of the covenant.** The contents of the ark are described in practical agreement with the representation of the Pentateuch. **Golden pot holding the manna.** Cf. Ex. 16:33, 34. It is called golden in the LXX, but not in the Hebrew. **Aaron's rod that budded.** As in Num. 17:10, 11. Like the rabbis, the writer understands the rod and manna to be within the ark. **The tables of the covenant.** Cf. Ex. 25:16, and 1 Kings 8:9.

5. **Cherubim.** As described in Ex. 25:18-22. This detailed catalogue of furniture and emphasis upon its worth and interest shows the writer's purpose to represent the old sanctuary at its best, indeed as being as good as an earthly one could be.

6. **Prepared.** Or, *furnished*. **Continually.** Daily, morning and evening. **The first tabernacle.** The Holy place is meant.

7. **Into the second.** The Most Holy place. Into the first, only priests might enter, into the second only the high priest, and he but once a year, and even then not without an offering of blood, — so far was that old ritual from giving men free and direct access to the presence of God. **Offereth for himself.** Evidence of the imperfection of his ministry, since he had to offer for himself, as the

8. the ¹errors of the people: the Holy Ghost ²this signifying, that the way into the holy place hath not yet been made manifest, while ³as ⁴the first tabernacle ⁵is yet
 9. standing; ⁶which is a ⁷parable ⁸for the time *now* present; ⁹according to which are offered both gifts and sacrifices that ¹⁰cannot, as touching the conscience, make
 10. ¹¹the worshipper ¹²perfect, *being* ¹³only (¹⁴with meats and

¹ Gr. *ignorances*. ² SV *om. as*. ³ SV *figure*

Messianic high priest has no need to do. **Errors.** Strictly, sins done in ignorance. Cf. Eccclus. 23 : 2, 3.

8. **This signifying.** The writer finds in this old service, with its forbidden sanctuary, the divine acknowledgment that free access to the presence of God is not yet to be had. The way into the sanctuary has not yet been revealed. **The first tabernacle.** Here, as above, the Holy place, the first chamber of the Tent of Meeting. **Is yet standing.** Better, *still has standing, i.e., position, status.* The Tent of Meeting with its two compartments, the one fairly accessible to the priests, the other practically inaccessible, spells exclusion from the immediate presence of God, just as long as the outer compartment, backed with the impassable veil, maintains its present standing, as the furthest point men may freely reach in the direction of God's presence. It comes, therefore, to appear rather as a bar preventing approach, than as an avenue of partial access.

9. **Which.** The *standing* is referred to. The old rôle or position of the Holy place was a parable, suggestive to the thoughtful mind of its own imperfect and transient nature. **For the time now present.** Better, *the time being*, the time then present. Translate, *And this position was a parable for the time being.* **According to which.** Or, *In keeping with which parable.* **Cannot . . . perfect.** In keeping with this old position of the outer chamber, all its service of gifts and offerings was lame and ineffectual, as far as the important matters of giving men a real sense of reconciliation and nearness to God were concerned. **The worshipper.** Gk. *Him who ministers, i.e.,* the priest officiating. Not even he is made perfect in conscience and spirit by his ministry. Or he is perhaps thought of as representing the persons for whom he offers as well as himself. **Perfect.** The failure of the old service to complete or perfect anything is again brought out.

10. The ineffectualness of the old offerings is natural enough in view of their material character. **Only . . . carnal ordinances.**

drinks and divers washings) carnal ordinances, imposed until ^oa time of reformation.

11. But Christ having come ^oa high priest of ¹ the good things ^oto come, ^othrough the ^ogreater and more perfect tabernacle, ^onot made with hands; that is to say,
 12. not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of ^ogoats and ^ocalves, but through ^ohis own blood, ^oentered in ^oonce for all into the holy place, ^ohaving obtained

* Some ancient authorities read *the good things that are come.*

Gk. *ordinances of flesh*, i.e., probably, of a material, fleshly kind. They affected the flesh, perhaps, making it ceremonially clean, but not the conscience. **With meats.** Perhaps, *Resting on meats*, or *Having to do with meats*, etc. **A time of reformation.** The fleshly character of the old ordinances and service stamped them as provisional. By *a time of reformation*, or setting right, perfecting, the Messianic time is evidently meant. The poor and trivial character of the old priestly ministry is thus apparent.

Christ's sacrifice immeasurably better than the old, 9 : 11-22.

11. Christ has made his way into the Sanctuary, and effected complete and lasting redemption there. **A high priest.** The work of Christ is here set forth as nearly as may be in terms of Levitical practice. **To come.** Better, *that are come*. The blessings of the Gospel are meant. **Through the . . . tabernacle.** To be connected with *Entered in*, vs. 12. Christ has come as high priest, and has entered, through the greater tent, into the sanctuary, once for all. **Greater and more perfect.** The ideal, heavenly Tent, the pattern shown to Moses in the mount, of which the old Tent of Meeting was a rough and shadowy copy. **Not made with hands, . . . not of this creation.** It is not a material Tent, but an ideal, heavenly one.

12. While Aaron entered the sanctuary with the blood of cattle, the new high priest has offered up his own blood, obviously an immeasurably more precious and acceptable sacrifice. **Goats.** For the people, Lev. 16 : 15. **Calves.** For the high priest, Lev. 16 : 11. **His own blood.** That Christ was himself the victim here appears again. **Entered in.** The central affirmation of vss. 11, 12. This was the better ministry of the new high priest. **Once for all.** His atonement did not have to be annually repeated, as did Aaron's. **Having obtained.** Better, *And obtained*, secured. **Eternal redemption.** Not merely the temporary atonement secured by the

13. °eternal redemption. °For if the blood of °goats and bulls, and the °ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the °cleanness of the
14. flesh: °how much more shall the blood of °Christ, who °through ¹the eternal Spirit offered himself °without blemish unto God, cleanse ²your °conscience
15. °from dead works °to serve the living God? And °for this cause he is the mediator of a new

¹ SVM his *eternal spirit*. ² Many ancient authorities read *our*.

old high priest, but eternally lasting redemption. His service or ministry is thus final and definitive. It thus surpasses Aaron's in its place of performance, the heavenly sanctuary; in the attendant sacrifice, not cattle but Christ himself; in its performance once for all, not repeatedly; and in its eternal effectiveness.

13. **For.** The writer elaborates the striking contrast between the old victims and the new. **Goats and bulls.** The victims on the annual Day of Atonement. **Ashes of a heifer.** As prescribed in Num. 19 for cases of uncleanness through touching the dead. The arrangement for cleansing collective Israel from the defilement of sin and death is covered by these two provisions. **Cleanness of the flesh.** These material offerings are effective in the material realm; they effect external, fleshly cleanness, cleansing the person rather than the conscience.

14. **How much more.** The *a fortiori* argument. **Christ.** Better, *the Christ*. **Through the eternal Spirit.** Better, *through an eternal spirit*. The old victims and offerings lacked the lofty moral quality that invested the sacrifice of Christ. The spirit of Christ's offering elevated it above all others, and gave it its enduring moral value. **Without blemish.** The word used of Levitical victims to express physical perfection is applied to Christ, in a moral sense. **Your.** Better, *Our*. **Conscience.** As the old offerings cleansed men's persons, the new frees the conscience, the inner life, from the sense of guilt, and the dominion of sin. **From dead works.** As in 6 : 1, sinful acts. **To serve.** The word implies *priestly service*, and recalls the writer's conception of Christ as our forerunner in the sanctuary of the divine presence. Cleansed by his offering, we are prepared to minister to God.

15. **For this cause.** The better ministry just established is now made to buttress the new covenant announced in 7 : 22; 8 : 6.

- ¹covenant, that ^oa death having taken place for the redemption of the ^otransgressions that were under the first ¹covenant, they ^othat have been called may
 16. ^oreceive the promise of the ^oeternal inheritance. For where a ^{o1}testament is, there must of necessity ²be
 17. the death of him that made it. For a ^{o1}testament is of force ³where there hath been death: ⁴for doth
 18. it ever avail while he that made it liveth? ^oWherefore

¹ The Greek word here used signifies both *covenant* and *testament*. ² Gr. *be brought*. ³ Gr. *over the dead*. ⁴ SV *for it doth never . . . liveth*

A death. That of Christ, to which a new meaning is now given, as validating a will, in which sense "covenant" is presently used. **Transgressions . . . under the first covenant.** Sins committed while the old, imperfect covenant was still in force, and only superficially atoned by its provisions. **That have been called.** Whether in former or latter times. Jewish as well as Christian saints are included in the writer's thought. The eternal nature of Christ's redemptive work, done through eternal spirit, made it avail for all these. **Receive the promise.** That is, the fulfilment of the promise. **Eternal inheritance.** Cf. 1 : 14; 6 : 12, 17. The thought of Christ as leaving a will or testament (covenant), which becomes operative upon his death, enables the writer to bring his death, always most difficult of acceptance for early believers, into strikingly close and necessary relations with the new covenant. He thus interprets the covenant or contract as a testamentary covenant, *i.e.*, a will, the same Greek word having both forces. The writer thus passes from a loftier to a lower view of the death of Christ, in his effort to commend to his readers the great salvation in terms not only of the new high priest but of the new covenant. For both conceptions, the death of Christ, so unintelligible and offensive to the early Christians, is shown to be essential. Christ has died, and his heirs now enter upon that fellowship with God which he has bequeathed to them through his will and testament. This does not, however, exhaust the promised inheritance, the fullest realization of which is shown elsewhere in the epistle to be still in the future.

16, 17. **Testament.** In the Greek, the same word as *covenant* above. That Christ should die was indispensable to the operativeness of his testament. It could not go into force while he still lived. The thought here is therefore not that we are *joint heirs with Christ*, as Paul puts it, Rom. 8 : 17, but that we are *Christ's heirs*.

- even °the first *covenant* hath not been dedicated
 19. without blood. For when every commandment
 °had been spoken by Moses unto all the people
 according to the law, he took the blood of the calves
 and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop,
 and sprinkled both the book itself, and all the people,
 20. saying, This is the blood of the ¹ covenant which God Ex. 24 : 8
 21. commanded to you-ward. Moreover the tabernacle
 and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like
 22. manner with the blood. And °according to the law,
 °I may almost say, all things are °cleansed with blood,
 and apart from °shedding of blood °there is no
 remission.

* The Greek word here used signifies both *covenant* and *testament*.

18. **Wherefore.** The necessity of bloodshedding in the type now appears. Death is a necessary accompaniment of covenant making. **The first covenant.** Here the writer returns to the earlier and more general sense of the word *covenant*.

19. **Had been spoken.** The reference is to the scene in Ex. 24 : 3-8, although the description given there is somewhat modified in this verse.

20. Ex. 24 : 8b.

21. As another instance of blood-sprinkling, the consecration of the Tabernacle is mentioned. This is described in Ex. 40 : 9, where an anointing of the Tabernacle and its furniture, not with blood, but with oil, is prescribed. This is the most serious discrepancy in the passage, and seems to be due to a lapse of memory on the writer's part; but it is worth noting that Josephus records that Moses not only used oil at the consecration of the Tabernacle, but also sprinkled it and its vessels with blood, *Antt.* 3 : 8 : 6. The writer's understanding is thus that of the best informed Jews of his day.

22. **According to the law.** This phrase limits both the assertions made in this verse. **I may almost say.** Better, *in general*. **Cleansed with blood.** The blood-sprinkling symbolized cleansing from sin. **Shedding of blood.** Better, *outpouring of blood*. The emphasis is not upon the slaughtering of the victim, but upon the subsequent use of its blood. **There is no remission.** Better, *No remission*, or forgiveness, *takes place*. Not referred to as a Christian principle, but as the usage of the Mosaic Law.

23. It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. °For Christ entered not into a holy place °made with hands, like in pattern to °the true; but °into heaven itself, now to appear °before the face of God °for us: °nor yet that he should °offer himself often; as the high priest entereth into the holy place 24. year by year °with blood not his own; else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now °once at °the ¹end of the ages hath he been manifested to °put away sin ²by the sacrifice of him-

¹ Or, consummation ² Or, by his sacrifice

Christ's priestly service better than the old, 9 : 23-28.

23. The writer returns to the thought of the ideal, heavenly sanctuary of Christ's ministry. If the mere earthly shadow-copies of that sanctuary and its furniture had to be thus cleansed with the blood of cattle, how much better and worthier must those offerings be whereby the heavenly originals are consecrated. The thought of Christ's sacrificial death here appears as the consecration-offering for the dedication of that heavenly sanctuary. He is the better sacrifice.

24. **For.** In explanation of the reference to the heavenly originals. **Made with hands.** A material sanctuary on earth. **The true.** *I.e.*, the ideal, original sanctuary in heaven. The writer's characteristic contrast between the original and the copy, the ideal and the material, the heavenly and the earthly, the shadow and the substance, reappears here. **Into heaven itself.** Suggestive of the grandeur of the ministry he performs, and of the immense worth of the sacrifice fit to be offered there. **Before the face of God.** Christ's entrance as high priest into the heavenly sanctuary brings him into the very presence of God. **For us.** In intercession, cf. 7 : 25.

25. **Nor yet.** *Sc. did he enter in.* **Offer himself often.** The solitary sacrifice of Christ, likely to perplex the readers, is shown to be reasonable, and eternally efficacious. **With blood not his own.** As the blood was not his own, but that of some animal, the repetition of the act was possible.

26. Had Christ's offering been repeated, he must have undergone repeated deaths; whereas men die but once, vs. 27. Had he offered repeatedly, it must have been some lesser offering than that which

27. self. And inasmuch as it is ¹appointed unto men once
 28. to die, and after this *cometh* °judgment; so °Christ also,
 having been once offered to bear the sins of many,
 °shall appear a second time, °apart from sin, to them Isa. 53 : 12
 that wait for him, unto salvation.

3. *The Final and Eternal Efficacy of Christ's Sacrifice,*
 10 : 1-18.

10. For the law having °a shadow of °the good *things*
 to come, not °the very image of the things, °they can
 never with °the same sacrifices year by year, which they
 offer continually, °make perfect °them that draw

¹ Gr. *laid up for*. ² SV om. *they*; some ancient authorities read *it can*.

he did make. **Once.** The emphasis is upon the one sacrifice, contrasted with the many of the old high priesthood. **The end of the ages.** As in 1 : 2, *the end of these days*. **Put away.** Better, *bring to nought*. **By the sacrifice of himself.** Better, *through his sacrifice*.

27. The familiar fact that man dies but once is cited in proof of the reasonableness of Christ's offering but once, since the sacrifice was himself. **Judgment.** That, and not a new existence upon earth, is the invariable sequel of human life. How absurd then to think of Christ's offering himself more than once.

28. **Christ.** Better, *The Christ*. **Shall** not indeed again live the life of man and offer himself to God, but **appear a second time, apart from sin.** Cf. 1 : 6. While other men go on from death to judgment, Christ's future work is to fulfil, to them that wait for him, the salvation upon which they have entered here.

1. **A shadow.** A word made emphatic in the Greek by being put first in the sentence. The law had only a shadow of the full redemption, not the redemption itself. **The good things to come.** The full salvation revealed in the Gospel. **The very image.** What appears to the eye fixed on the reality which casts the shadow. **They can never.** Rather, *Can never*. The law can never. **The same sacrifices year by year . . . continually.** The repetition of the sacrifices, here strongly emphasized, brings out the fact that they could not collectively, any more than individually, perfect

2. nigh. Else would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshippers, having been °once cleansed,
3. would have had no more °¹conscience of sins? °But in those *sacrifices* there is °a remembrance made of
4. sins year by year. For it is impossible that the blood
5. of bulls and goats should take away sins. °Wherefore °when he cometh into the world, °he saith,

Ps. 40 : 6-8

Sacrifice and offering °thou wouldest not,
°But a body didst thou prepare for me;

¹ SV *consciousness*.

their offerers. **Make perfect.** Cf. 7 : 19, *The law perfected nothing. Them that draw nigh.* *I.e.*, to offer sacrifice. Primarily the officiating priests, but here probably including those for whom they sacrificed.

2. The writer finds in the repetition only an acknowledgment of inadequacy. If the Levitical sacrifices could have perfected the worshippers in conscience, they would have completed their work and ceased to take place. **Once cleansed.** In reality no cleansing at all took place, except of certain offences against ritual; moral transgressions, the only real ones, were unaffected. **Conscience.** *I.e.*, Consciousness.

3. **But.** On the contrary, so far from effecting the blotting out of sins. **A remembrance made . . . year by year.** The annually recurring sacrifice was but an annual reminder of sins committed, unattended with any real cleansing virtue.

4. In this downright statement the writer sets forth his view of Levitical religion. Cf. Hosea's words, quoted by Jesus, *I desire mercy and not sacrifice*, Matt. 9 : 13; 12 : 7; Hos. 6 : 6. The writer feels the difficulty of assigning a moral effect to a physical act.

5. **Wherefore.** The efficacy of Christ's sacrifice of himself and the inefficacy of animal sacrifice explain the Messianic oracle of Ps. 40 : 6-8. **When he cometh into the world.** The oracle is understood by the writer Messianically, as expressing the spirit of Christ in entering the world, and is used in the free, uncritical, poetic way characteristic of the writer in dealing with the Old Testament. **He saith.** That is, the Messiah. **Thou wouldest not.** In these words the psalmist sets aside material sacrifice as of little worth in the sight of God. **But a body.** The writer's habit of following the LXX here gives him a widely different sense from that of the

6. In whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou
°hadst no pleasure:
7. Then said I, Lo, °I am come
(In the roll of the book °it is written of me)
°To do thy will, O God.
8. °Saying above, °Sacrifices and offerings and whole
burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou wouldest not,
neither hadst pleasure therein (the °which are offered
9. according to the law), °then hath he said, Lo, I am

Hebrew, at least as we have it. The Hebrew reads, *Mine ears hast thou opened*, and means that instead of sacrifice, obedience to the voice of God is what he desires. The whole oracle would thus be a setting aside of all sacrificial ritual, in favor of a life of spiritual obedience to the will of God. As read in the LXX, however, and quoted here, the words *A body didst thou prepare for me* give a different turn to the whole, which here means, not the discontinuance of sacrifice and offering, but the substitution for them of another offering, that of the body of the Messiah, which has been prepared for him and which he gives up to the will of God. The body that is prepared is that in which the Messiah becomes man and enters the world, in which too he suffers, and offers to God the only effectual sacrifice.

6. **Hadst no pleasure.** The Old Testament itself thus condemns the Levitical system as incapable of pleasing God.

7. **I am come . . . to do thy will.** *I.e.*, in the body thou hast prepared for me, I am come to do thy will on earth, and offer myself as the sacrifice which alone can please thee. **It is written of me.** This is the task and duty which God's law has for me. **To do thy will.** To offer myself, in accordance with God's will, the only acceptable and effectual sacrifice that can be made to him.

8. The writer proceeds to expound the oracle quoted. **Saying above . . . then hath he said.** Better, *He* (the Messiah) *saith above . . . and then he said.* **Sacrifices . . . whole burnt offerings.** The clauses of the oracle relating to Levitical sacrifice are here combined, to present God's unfavorable verdict upon it, in direct contrast with the Messiah's offering, implied in the words, *Lo, I am come to do thy will*, vs. 9. **Which are offered according to the law.** These four groups fairly cover Levitical sacrifice. God thus, through this Messianic oracle, disclaims the old sacrificial ritual.

9. **Then hath he said.** The writer points out the prompt re-

- come to do thy will. °He taketh away the first, that
 10. he may establish the second. °¹ By which will we
 have been sanctified through °the offering of the body
 11. of Jesus Christ °once for all. And °every ²priest
 indeed °standeth °day by day ministering and offer-
 ing °oftentimes the same sacrifices, the which °can
 12. °never take away sins: but °he, when he had offered
 °one sacrifice for ³sins for ever, °sat down °on the

Ps. 110: 1

¹ Or, *In*
 down etc.

² Some ancient authorities read *high priest*.

³ Or, *sins, forever sat*

joinder of the Messiah to his own assertion of God's dissatisfaction with the old sacrifices. It is as though he said: "O God, thou hast no pleasure in these Levitical offerings, but here am I, ready to do thy will." It is precisely then, when the divine discontent with Leviticalism has been most positively stated, that the Messiah offers himself to the will of God. **He taketh away the first.** In this oracle, the writer finds foreshadowed the superseding of the old order of sacrifice by the new, eternal, only acceptable offering of Christ.

10. **By which will.** *I.e., thy will*, mentioned above. In offering himself to the divine will, and doing that will, Christ has wrought a sanctification in which his brethren now share; they are sanctified through his once-offered sacrifice. **The offering of the body.** Words taken from the oracle just quoted. **Once for all.** Again the solitariness of Christ's offering is emphasized.

11. The mean, tedious, and futile character of the old ministry is concisely put. **Every priest.** They were many. **Standeth.** The posture of the inferior and menial. **Day by day ministering.** Tedious repetition of an interminable service. **Oftentimes the same sacrifices.** The ritual had to be repeated again and again, without progress or development, a servile and lifeless task. **Can never take away sins.** The climax is reached. All this tedious, sordid formalism was futile and to no purpose, for it lacked just that moral quality necessary to affect the sinful heart. **Never.** No matter how oft repeated or long continued.

12. Contrast the Messianic priest. **He.** Christ. **One sacrifice . . . for ever.** In contrast with the ever-repeated but never-effective sacrifices of the many Levitical priests. **Sat down.** Took his seat, in royal state. **On the right hand of God.** Thus in supreme contrast to those Jewish priests, forever busied with their

13. right hand of God; ⁰¹ from henceforth expecting till
 14. his enemies be made the footstool of his feet. For ⁰by
 one offering ⁰he hath perfected ⁰for ever them that
 15. are ⁰sanctified. And ⁰the Holy Ghost also ⁰beareth
 witness to us: for ⁰after he hath said,

16. This is the ²covenant that ³I will make with them Jer. 31 : 33,
34
 After those days, saith the Lord;
 I will put my laws on their heart,
 And upon their mind also will I write them;
then saith he,

¹ SV om. *from.* ² Or, *testament* Gr. *I will covenant.*

trivial and revolting toil. The words are those of the psalmist, Ps. 110 : 1, often before applied by the writer to Jesus, 1 : 3, 13; 8 : 1.

13. The verse completes the picture of the sublime exaltation of the Messianic priest. His work accomplished, he awaits, in serene dignity, the promised humiliation of his foes. **From henceforth.** From the time when he took his seat. Beside such a figure, at once king and priest, how mean and unworthy those Levite priests appear, always busy with their petty and futile tasks.

14. **By one offering.** Where Leviticalism prescribed thousands and millions, a well-nigh infinite number. **He hath perfected.** As all the toil of all the priests of the old religion had failed to do, *for the law perfected nothing*, 7 : 19. **For ever.** His offering is final and fully adequate. **Sanctified.** That is, brought into covenant relations with God.

15. In support of the affirmation just made, vs. 14, the writer appeals again to words of Jeremiah, quoted in 8 : 10-12. **The Holy Ghost.** As in 9 : 8. **Beareth witness to us.** *I.e., beareth us witness*, attests for us the truth of what has just been said. **After he hath said.** No principal affirmation appears in the sentence unless, as some think, it be the *Saith the Lord*, of vs. 16. But the real emphasis of the citation belongs on vs. 17, so that it is probable that a word of quotation should be supplied at that point, as in the English.

16. A comparison with the same passage as it appears in 8 : 10-12 will show that six clauses of the oracle are omitted at the end of vs. 16, the purpose being to bring the promised oblivion of sin into the closest connection with the promise of the new covenant with its inward law.

17. And their sins and their iniquities will I remember
 °no more.
18. Now where remission of these is, there is no more
 offering for sin.

4. *Exhortation to draw near and hold fast, reënforced
 by solemn warnings against apostasy, and by
 reminders of former heroic days, 10 : 19-39.*

19. °Having °therefore, brethren, °boldness to enter
 20. into °the holy place °by the blood of Jesus, °by the
 way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way,

17. **No more.** The promise of eternal forgiveness of sin and iniquity forms an integral part of the promise of the new covenant. When God writes his law on men's hearts, he will forget their sins forever.

18. This promise of eternal forgiveness and forgetfulness of sin shows the needlessness of further sacrifice, and thus confirms the teaching of the finality and eternal adequacy of Christ's one sacrifice, about the far-reaching effects of which the writer seems to think his readers may still have misgivings. Hence his appeal to this oracle, already once used in the epistle, as showing that under the new covenant sins are forgiven forever, and therefore no further offerings are to be made; which can only mean that the offering that has been made has eternally sufficed. Vss. 15-18 thus bring the Old Testament to witness to the statement made in vs. 14, to which they constitute a sort of confirmatory appendix.

Exhortation to Christian confidence and steadfastness, 10 : 19-25.

19. **Having.** Since we have. **Therefore.** In view of the whole preceding argument. **Boldness to enter.** In contrast with the old prohibition against entering the sanctuary. **The holy place.** Of the eternal tabernacle, *i.e.*, the very presence of God. **By the blood of Jesus.** To be connected with *since we have boldness*. The sacrificial blood of Jesus enabled him to enter there, and as his sacrifice is forever adequate, and he entered as our forerunner, we have free access to the divine presence by his blood.

20. **By the way.** To be connected with *to enter*, vs. 19. The sense is, Since by the blood of Jesus we have boldness for the entrance of the sanctuary, an entrance which he dedicated for us, fresh and living, through the veil, that is, his flesh. The figure is drawn

21. through ^othe veil, that is to say, his flesh; ^oand *having*
 22. ^oa great priest ^oover the house of God; ^olet us draw
 near with a true heart in ^ofulness of faith, having
 ^oour hearts sprinkled ^ofrom an evil ²conscience, and
 23. ^oour body washed with pure water: let us ^ohold fast
 ^othe confession of our hope ^othat it waver not; for ^ohe
 24. is faithful that promised: and let us consider one

Zech. 6 : 11;

Num. 12 : 7

Or, *full assurance* ²SV *conscience*; and *having our body washed with pure water, let us hold fast*

from the old Levitical high priest passing within the veil of the Most Holy place, with the consecrating blood. As his entering in was dedicated by that blood, Christ's entering, and his followers' after him, is by his own blood. **The veil, that is to say, his flesh.** A poetic touch, forceful and beautiful, but not to be pressed into undue significance.

21. **And having.** As above, *since we have.* **A great priest.** The reference now is probably to the intercessory work of the exalted Christ; cf. 7 : 25. **Over the house of God.** Cf. 3 : 5, *Christ (was faithful) as a son over his (i.e., God's) house.*

22. **Let us draw near.** The writer returns to his great practical purpose, to stimulate his readers to lay hold of the great salvation that is theirs, and avail themselves of that unrestricted fellowship with God which Jesus has made possible for them. **Fulness.** Better, *full assurance.* **Our hearts sprinkled.** As the priests were sprinkled of old, Ex. 29 : 21; Lev. 8 : 30. **From an evil conscience.** The sprinkling cleanses and thus frees from the sense of sin. **Our body washed.** As the priests washed before ministering, Ex. 29 : 4; 30 : 20. The reference here is probably to Christian baptism, poetically interpreted as a purification of the Christian priest preliminary to his ministering to God. Sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and thus cleansed from inward stain, and washed with the waters of baptism, and thus outwardly clean, he is ready to minister to God in the sanctuary into which Jesus has forever opened the way.

23. **Hold fast.** The writer's most frequent admonition, implying that his readers are in danger of falling away, through indifference or persecution. **The confession of our hope.** Or, *the confession of hope.* **That it waver not.** Lit., *unwavering.* **He . . . that promised.** God. On the promises, cf. 4 : 1; 8 : 6; 9 : 15.

24. More exactly, *Let us observe one another, for, i.e., with a view to, provocation of love and noble deeds.* The idea is not to provoke

25. another to provoke unto love and good works; °not forsaking ⁰¹the assembling of ourselves together, °as the custom of some is, but °exhorting *one another*; and so much the more, 'as °ye see the day drawing nigh.
26. For if we °sin wilfully after that we have received °the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth °no more
27. a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a ⁰²fierceness of fire which shall

Isa. 26 : 11
LXX.

* SV *our own assembling together.* * Or, *jealousy*

one another to love, but by observing others to stimulate one's self to love and helpfulness.

25. Not forsaking. Or, *And let us not forsake.* The assembling of ourselves together. Or, *our own assembling together.* As the custom of some is. The reference is probably to the open withdrawal of some members from Christian fellowship, in which the writer sees grave peril. **Exhorting.** Or, *Let us exhort,* encourage. **Ye see the day drawing nigh.** It is implied that signs portending the Lord's return were already to be seen. *The day*, used by itself for the Messianic Day of the prophets, the apocalyptists, and the early Christians, is unusual, but is found in 1 Thess. 5 : 4, and perhaps in Rom. 13 : 12. Early Christians lived in constant expectation of that day, when Jesus would return to judge the world and establish his kingdom, and these readers perhaps found definite tokens of its approach in the perils threatening them.

The dreadful penalty of apostasy, 10 : 26-31.

26. Sin. That is, *go on sinning.* **The knowledge.** Better, *the full knowledge.* Full knowledge of the will of God and the great salvation imposes a fearful responsibility. **No more a sacrifice.** The single sacrifice once offered by Christ admits of no repetition. This is the solemn corollary of the doctrine of the eternal efficacy of that one offering. The writer here returns to the tone of warning used in 2 : 3; 4 : 1; 6 : 4, 8.

27. Fierceness of fire which shall devour. Or, *Fiery jealousy which is to devour.* The writer seems to transfer to the sacrifice of Christ the Old Testament teaching that sacrifice is accepted only for sins of ignorance. For sins committed after coming to the full knowledge of the truth it cannot avail. Yet it is not impossible that his meaning here is, that since these apostates repudiate the sacrifice

28. devour the adversaries. A man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without compassion on *the word of*
29. two or three witnesses: °of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot °the Son of God, and hath counted °the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, ¹an °unholy thing, and hath done °despite
30. unto the Spirit of grace? °For we know him that said, °Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. Ex. 24 : 8
Deut. 32 : 35;
Rom. 12 : 19
Ps. 135 : 14
31. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
32. But call to remembrance the former days, in which,

* Gr. a common thing.

which Christ has offered, and there is no other to be thought of, they are defenceless and inexcusable before the wrath of God.

28. Death by stoning was the penalty for the violation of the covenant established by Moses. Cf. Deut. 17 : 2, 6.

29. **Of how much sorer punishment.** The *a fortiori* argument, as in 2 : 2 f. ; 9 : 13 f. ; 12 : 25. Death was the penalty under the old Law; under the new covenant, so much greater in every way, correspondingly greater penalties will be imposed. **The Son of God.** The apostate tramples upon, *i.e.*, publicly rejects, him whom God has most highly exalted. **The blood of the covenant . . . unholy.** He has treated the sacrificial, consecrating blood of Jesus as a profane and common thing. **Despite unto the Spirit.** His crowning act of impiety, in despising that present guiding and sustaining spirit, which was the gift of grace and the pledge of divine fellowship. Cf. Mark 3 : 28-30.

30. **For.** In support of the sorer punishment to be expected, the writer quotes from the Old Testament texts setting forth God's retributive justice. **Vengeance belongeth unto me.** Quoted in the form neither of the Hebrew nor of the LXX, but of Rom. 12 : 19, perhaps through the influence of that epistle, which was pretty certainly known to the writer, but more probably because the text was current in this Greek form.

31. With this telling sentence the writer takes leave of this dark theme, leaving his readers to imagine for themselves what doom such a being may have in store for the apostate.

- °after ye were enlightened, ye endured °a great conflict of sufferings; partly, being made a °gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, becoming
33. °partakers with them that were so used. For ye both had compassion on °them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing
34. ¹ that ² ye yourselves have °a better possession and
35. °an abiding one. Cast not away therefore your bold-
36. ness, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of ³patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise.
- Isa. 26 : 20 37. For yet a very little while,
- Hab. 2 : 3, 4 He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry.

¹ Or, *that ye have your own selves for a better possession.* ² SV with some ancient authorities reads *ye have for yourselves a better possession.* ³ SVM *steadfastness.*

Stirring reminder of former heroism, 10 : 32-39.

32. The writer seeks to rouse his readers to steadfastness and devotion, by reminding them of their heroic past. **After ye were enlightened.** *I.e., soon after accepting Christ.* **A great conflict of sufferings.** The reference is to the persecution under Nero, which formed an early and terrible chapter in the history of the Roman church.

33. **Gazingstock.** Better, *a spectacle.* Public exposure to abuse and hardship had been experienced. **Partakers.** Sharing the disgrace and distress of their imperilled brethren.

34. Imprisonment and confiscation had not deterred the readers in those early days of their faith. **Them that were in bonds.** Gk. *the prisoners.* **A better possession.** Than those which have been torn from them. **An abiding one.** This introduces the thought, later emphasized, that the Christian has an abiding city and inheritance, far better than the fleeting property and abode of this world.

35. This former joyful confidence of theirs, which carries with it such recompense, is not to be abandoned now.

36. Steadfastness and endurance are still necessary, in order to attain the promised salvation in its fulness.

37. The struggle is not to be of long duration, as the writer assures them in language taken from the prophets and somewhat freely rearranged. This is perhaps explained by the fact that the writer

38. But ¹ my righteous one shall live by faith:
And if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him.
39. But ^owe are not ^{o2}of them that shrink back unto perdition; but ^oof them that have faith unto ^othe ³saving of the soul.

¹ Some ancient authorities read *the righteous one*. ² Gr. *of shrinking back* . . . but of faith. ³ Or, *gaining*

is not appealing to these as oracles, but is appropriating their familiar words to express his own thought of the speedy coming of Christ. The prophecy of Habakkuk, with its emphasis upon faith, as contrasted with cowardly retreat and apostasy, is skilfully made to serve as a transition to the great discourse on the heroes of faith.

39. **We are not.** The affirmation has the force of an exhortation, and more. The writer will not permit himself to think that his readers are liable to so cowardly and fatal a blunder. **Of them that shrink back.** Lit., *of withdrawal*. **Of them that have faith.** Lit., *of faith*. **The saving of the soul.** *Preserving of soul*, or perhaps better, *obtaining of life*, i.e., in the Messianic world.

V. THE CHARACTER OF FAITH, AS THE FACULTY OF
LAYING FIRM HOLD ON THE UNSEEN REALITIES,
EXEMPLIFIED IN ALL THE HEROES OF FAITH,
AND PREËMINENTLY IN JESUS, SET FORTH
WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE
TRIALS OF THE READERS, WHICH
ARE THE DISCIPLINE OF THEIR
FAITH, NOT ITS DISAPPOINT-
MENT, II : I-12 : 29.

II : I

1. *Faith the power through which those of old wrought their achievements, and gained God's commendation, II : I-40.*

11. Now faith is ¹ the assurance of *things* hoped for,
2. ² the ³ proving of things not seen. For therein the
3. elders had witness borne to them. By faith we ^ounder-
stand that the ^{o4} worlds have been framed by ^othe
word of God, so that what is seen ^ohath not been made

¹ Or, *the giving substance to*; SV *assurance*, om. *the* ² SV *a conviction* ³ Or, *test* ⁴ Gr. *ages*.

The nature of faith seen in the experiences of God's first servants,
II : I-12.

1. Not to be understood as a full definition of faith, but as a helpful and suggestive characterization of it. Faith is assurance of what we hope for, conviction (lit., *proof*) of things that we do not see. The readers should not be disappointed at not having already realized all the promises, since this laying hold of the ideal, unseen world is the very task and province of faith.

2. It was faith that won for the worthies of old the divine commendation which the scriptures record.

3. It is faith that enables us to perceive God's relation to the world. **Understand.** Better, *perceive*. **Worlds.** *I.e.*, the successive ages of the world's development. **The word of God.** His creative utterance, as set forth in Gen. I : I-31. **Hath not been made.**

4. out of things which ¹do appear. °By faith Abel offered unto God a °more excellent sacrifice than Cain, °through which he had °witness borne to him that he was righteous, ²God bearing witness ³in respect of his gifts: and °through it °he being dead yet speaketh. Gen. 4 : 4
5. °By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him: for ⁴before his translation he °hath had witness borne to him that he had been °well-pleasing Gen. 5 : 24

¹ SV om. *do.* ² The Greek text in this clause is somewhat uncertain. ³ Or, *over his gifts* ⁴ SV *he hath had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been etc.*

Or, *hath not arisen.* The thought is, not that the creation was necessarily out of nothing, but that faith forbids a merely material interpretation of the physical and the historical world, and convinces us of God's creative and directive activity.

4. The Old Testament verdict upon Abel was due to his faith, because of which even death could not silence his voice. **By faith.** Just wherein this lay the writer does not definitely say; perhaps in the fact that Abel's offering was greater, and thus reflected a greater sense of the worth and demands of the unseen world. **More excellent.** Better, *larger*, greater, more abundant. **Through which.** *I.e.*, either through the sacrifice, or through his faith, shown in the sacrifice; probably the latter. **Witness borne to him that he was righteous.** Not specifically in the Old Testament, but impliedly there, as Jewish tradition understood; cf. *Abel the righteous*, Matt. 23: 35, 1 John 3: 12. **In respect of his gifts.** *I.e.*, on the occasion of, in the case of, *his gifts*. Cf. Gen. 4: 4. God's approval of Abel's offering implied his acceptance of Abel himself as righteous. **Through it.** Through faith. **He being dead yet speaketh.** That is, even when he was dead, Abel still spoke, for God heard his voice calling to him from the ground, Gen. 4: 10. This supplies additional evidence that God accounted him righteous. Cf. Ps. 116: 15; Luke 18: 7; Rev. 6: 9, 10.

5. Enoch, too, through his faith escaped death. **By faith.** The Old Testament says nothing of Enoch's faith, but states that he *pleased God*, for so the LXX reads in Gen. 5: 24, instead of the Heb. *walked with God*. His translation is interpreted by the writer to mean that he was enabled to escape the universal fate of death and was removed to the presence of God. **Hath had witness borne.**

6. unto God: and without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing *unto him*: °for he that °cometh to God °must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them °that
- Gen. 6 : 13- 7. seek after him. °By faith Noah, being warned of *God*
22 concerning things not seen as yet, °moved with godly fear, °prepared an ark to the saving of his house; °through which °he condemned the world, and °became heir of °the righteousness which is according to faith.
- Gen. 12 : 1 8. °By faith Abraham, when he was called, °obeyed °to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an

He is thus among the certified or attested ones mentioned in vs. 2. **Well-pleasing.** As stated in the LXX, Gen. 5 : 24.

6. In proof that it was the faith of Enoch that made him pleasing to God, the writer shows that what is said of him positively implies faith. Without it he could not have pleased God, as he did. **For.** In support of the general statement just made. **Cometh to God.** Draws near, seeks to approach. **Must believe.** Else he would not seek to approach him. *Believe* (pisteuo) is in the Gr. the verb akin to the word *faith* (pistis), and we may render *must have faith*. **That seek after him.** Or, *that seek him out*, seek him earnestly.

7. The faith and righteousness of Abel and Enoch must be inferred from what is said in scripture, but of Noah it is expressly stated that he was *a righteous man, perfect in his generations*, Gen. 6 : 9; cf. 7 : 1. **By faith Noah . . . prepared an ark.** There was no visible occasion for the ark when he prepared it, so that his action was strictly controlled by the consciousness of the unseen. **Moved with godly fear.** Or simply, *providently*. **Through which.** *I.e., through which faith.* **He condemned the world.** Noah, by his act in building the ark, virtually pronounced doom upon the rest of mankind, since the ark could have no significance apart from the impending retributive catastrophe. **Became heir.** To be connected with *through which faith*. Wisd. 10 : 4. **The righteousness which is according to faith.** The righteousness, or justification, according to faith, here ascribed to Noah, strongly suggests Paul's view of Abraham's justification by faith, Gal. 3 : 6, Rom. 4 : 9, and some Pauline influence here is very probable. Yet it must not be forgotten that the writer is arguing from the acknowledged righteousness of these heroes to their faith, not from their faith to their justification.

8. **By faith Abraham . . . obeyed.** In this obedience to the call which came to him, lay Abraham's great exhibition of faith. Cf. Gen. 12 : 1. **To go out.** Explanatory of the obedience and what

- inheritance; and he went out, °not knowing whither
 9. he went. By faith he became a sojourner in the land
 of promise, as in a *land* °not his own, °¹dwelling
 in tents, °with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him
 10. °of the same promise: for he looked for the city which
 °hath the foundations, whose ²builder and maker is
 11. God. By faith even Sarah herself received power to
 conceive seed when she was past age, since she counted

Gen. 23 : 4

¹ Or, *having taken up his abode in tents* ² Or, *architect*

was involved in it. **Not knowing.** *I.e., although he did not know.* Abraham's great initial act in setting out from home was preëminently an act of faith in the unseen.

9. Even after his arrival in the promised land, Abraham still lived in faith, not realization. **Not his own, dwelling in tents.** Touches that emphasize the long discipline of Abraham's faith. **With Isaac and Jacob, the heirs . . . of the same promise.** His posterity like himself are sojourners in the land they have expected to possess, a new trial being thus occasioned to the faith of Abraham. They, like him, were as yet prospective heirs only, not having entered upon the possession of the inheritance.

10. What Abraham was looking forward to by faith was not a mere settlement in Canaan, but that celestial city which has enduring foundations, of which God is architect and builder. Cf. 11 : 16; 12 : 22; 13 : 14. **Hath the foundations.** In contrast to the shifting encampment of his nomadic life, Abraham looked forward to a time when he might in a permanent settlement (*having foundations*) enjoy the fellowship of his God.

11. The mention of Sarah among those whose faith is at least implicitly attested in the Old Testament, presents serious difficulty, since only her incredulity is mentioned in this connection in Genesis. It has therefore been urged that it is still Abraham's faith that is being illustrated in this, as in the previous vss. and the following vs. On this view, *even Sarah herself*, means in spite of her unbelief, and we should translate below, *since he counted him that had promised faithful*. It is perhaps more natural, however, to understand that Sarah's own faith is intended, and that Sarah, not Abraham, is the subject of *counted him faithful*, in which case we must suppose that the writer understands that, from being at first sceptical, she came to have faith in the promise of offspring made to Abraham. Gen. 18 : 9-15.

Gen. 22: 17;
32: 12

12. him faithful who had promised: °wherefore also °there sprang °of one, and him °as good as dead, *so many* °as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand, which is by the sea shore, innumerable.

13. °These all died ¹in faith, °not having received °the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having °confessed that they were

1 Chron. 29:
15;
Gen. 23: 4

14. strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking

15. after °a country of their own. And if indeed they

* Gr. according to.

12. **Wherefore.** Because of this triumph of faith. **There sprang.** More exactly, *were begotten*. **Of one.** Abraham. **As good as dead.** Lit., *Deadened*, i.e., incapacitated by age. **As the stars.** Gen. 22: 17. This fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham fell of course long after his time, as the writer immediately indicates, vs. 13.

Their relation to the promises, and its meaning, 11: 13-16.

13. **These all.** Not all those thus far mentioned, but Abraham and his house, — Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob. Only to these, among the worthies thus far named, did the promises of national development and world-wide blessing in question apply, and the words *died in faith* are not so appropriate to Abel and Enoch. **Not having received.** In 6: 15 and 11: 33 Abraham and others are said to have *attained the promises*, not in the sense of realizing their fulfilment, but of having certain promises made to them by God. **The promises.** In the sense of what was promised. They had *attained the promises*, but not the fulfilment of the promises. What is emphasized is that Abraham and his immediate descendants lived all their lives, and even died, without having the divine promises fulfilled to them. Their whole experience and activity were in the realm of faith alone, not sight. **Confessed that they were strangers.** They understood, and by their behavior acknowledged, that the fulfilment of the promises was not to be in their time. Cf. Gen. 23: 4; 47: 9.

14. **A country of their own.** Lit., *a fatherland*. In owning that they were pilgrims and strangers, they implied a connection with some other land which was truly their own.

15. This was not Mesopotamia, whence the stock had come, for they seem never to have thought of returning thither to live.

- had been mindful of that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.
16. But now ^othey desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly: ^owherefore God is not ashamed of them, ^oto be called their God: ^ofor he hath prepared for them ^oa city.
17. ^oBy faith Abraham, being tried, ^o1 offered up Isaac: Gen. 22 : 1, 2
^oyea, he that had ^ogladly received the promises was
18. offering up his ^oonly begotten son; *even he* ² to whom

¹ Gr. *hath offered up.* ² Or, of

16. **They desire.** This is the meaning of their acknowledgment of being pilgrims and strangers. They are looking to a country other than Canaan or Mesopotamia, and doubtless better than these, of which they have laid hold through faith; and this can only be the heavenly fatherland, to which the writer looks forward as the Messianic consummation. **Wherefore.** In response to this expression of faith, God accepts them as indeed his. **To be called their God.** As in Ex. 3 : 6, *I am the God of . . . Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* **For he hath prepared.** Showing that he is not ashamed of them. **A city.** The heavenly fatherland.

The workings of faith in the patriarchs, the lawgiver, and the heroes of the conquest, 11 : 17-31.

17. Abraham's faith had its supreme manifestation when he was called upon to offer up Isaac. **By faith.** Abraham's readiness, at the command of God, to offer up his son, was due to the reality that the unseen world had for him, and thus attested his faith. Cf. vs. 19. **Being tried.** Cf. Gen. 22 : 1, LXX, *God tried Abraham.* **Offered up.** As far as Abraham's intention was concerned, the sacrifice was consummated, going far enough to establish his obedience, and so his faith. **Yea.** The writer repeats the amazing fact, as throwing Abraham's faith into the highest relief. **Gladly received.** Or, *welcomed.* The readiness of the receiver of the promises to sacrifice the son in whom those promises centred, constitutes a paradox, which sets Abraham's faith in the unseen in the clearest, strongest light. **Only begotten.** Abraham had other sons, Gen. 16 : 16; 25 : 2, of whom Ishmael at least was older than Isaac. Yet as the one son in whom the promises were to have their fulfilment, Isaac is called the only son in Gen. 22 : 2.

18. **It was said.** Gen. 21 : 12. **Shall thy seed be called.** Or, *a seed shall bear thy name.* It was to Isaac that the promise of a great and blessing-bringing posterity was definitely attached.

- Gen. 21 : ■ 19. °it was said, In Isaac °shall thy seed be called : accounting that God *is* able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also °in a ¹parable receive him
 20. back. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even
 21. concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he ²was a dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning* °upon the top of his staff.
 Gen. 47 : 31
 LXX
 Gen. 50 : 25 22. By faith Joseph, when his end was nigh, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel;

¹ SV figure ² SV was dying

19. The key to Abraham's strange conduct is found in his perfect faith in God. He did not doubt that God, who had wonderfully called Isaac into being, could bring him back again, even from the dead, and so still fulfil the promises in him. **In a parable.** Since Abraham had prepared to slay Isaac, and had thus given him up as it were to death, he received him back as though from the dead.

20. The deceit practised upon Isaac, by which he was caused to give the first-born's blessing to the younger son, is not so much thought of here, as the transference by Isaac to his sons of the promises which he had inherited, and which dealt with the future. His faith lay in his assurance that the promises made to his house, which had not been fulfilled to him, would yet find fulfilment in the experience of his posterity.

21. Jacob's faith was shown in his last days on earth, when death was impending, and the expectation that the promises would be fulfilled to him personally had to be given up, when, instead of losing his hold upon them, he made them over to his descendants, as a rich and precious inheritance. So explicit and strong was Jacob's hold upon the unseen that he could even in anticipation assign not only to his own sons, but even to each of the sons of Joseph, his especial part in the fulfilment of the divine promises. **Upon the top of his staff.** So the LXX reads, Gen. 47:31. The Heb. has *upon the head of the bed*. From a different incident in the life of Jacob, in which his faith is shown by his desire to be buried with his fathers in Canaan, implying his keen sense of identification with them and participation in the promises made to them. Or, the writer connects these words with the blessing of Joseph's sons, which immediately follows, Gen. 48 : 1.

22. Joseph's firm hold on the unseen was shown in his reference

23. and gave commandment concerning his bones. °By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months °by his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of °the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called °the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to ¹be evil entreated °with the people of God, than °to enjoy the pleasures of sin °for a season; °accounting °the reproach of ²Christ greater riches than
- Ex. 2: 2
Ex. 2: 11
Ps. 89: 50, 51

¹ SV *share ill treatment* ² Or, *the Christ*

to the promise made to the fathers, and to his command that his bones be taken to the promised land when the Israelites should go thither. Gen. 50: 24, 25.

23. **By faith.** The faith was that of his parents, who held to the promise as somehow to be fulfilled, despite the hopeless prospect of the time. Without this hold on the promise, they would not have had the courage and spirit to try to save the child. **By his parents.** As in the LXX, *they hid him three months*, Ex. 2: 2. The Heb. ascribes the action to his mother. **The king's commandment.** Ex. 1: 16, 22.

24. **The son of Pharaoh's daughter.** Lit., *a son of a daughter of Pharaoh*, emphasizing the exalted station declined by Moses. This refusal is not expressly stated in Exodus, or in Josephus's account of Moses, *Antt.* 2: 9 ff., but is implied in Ex. 2: 11, 12, where Moses takes the part of his Hebrew brethren.

25. This refusal of immediate tangible benefits reflects the greater value put by Moses upon the unseen realities of divine promise, laid hold of by faith. By this refusal Moses incurred hardship and humiliation. **With the people of God.** As shown in his protection of the smitten Hebrew, Ex. 2: 11, 12. By that act he cast in his lot with the enslaved Hebrews. His faith was shown in his power to recognize in these slaves the people of God and heirs of divine promise. **To enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.** Lit., *to have passing enjoyment of sin*. Not so much that public life in Egypt would have been essentially sinful, but that for Moses it would have meant apostasy from God to have taken part in it. Moses' example in this regard has practical value for the readers of the epistle. **For a season.** A mere lifetime, in contrast with that eternal future of which faith lays hold.

26. **Accounting.** Better, *since he accounted*. Here lay the reason

Ex. 12: 21-
28

- the treasures of Egypt: for ^ohe looked unto ^othe
 27. recompense of reward. By faith ^ohe forsook Egypt,
^onot fearing the wrath of the king: for he ^oendured,
 28. ^oas seeing ^ohim who is invisible. By faith he ¹kept
 the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, that
^othe destroyer of the firstborn should not touch them.
 29. By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry

¹ Or, *instituted* Gr. *hath made*.

for his refusal of a life of ease and consequence in Egypt. **The reproach of Christ.** Better, *of the Christ*. Cf. Ps. 89: 50, 51, *The reproach . . . wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thy Christ*. The expression is implied in Rom. 15: 3, where the words of Ps. 69: 9 are applied to Christ. Moses had to encounter such reproach in his generation as the Christ had, in the highest degree, to endure; but he recognized it as the burden which must be borne by the chosen of God and so worth more than all that Egypt could give. **He looked.** Lit., *looked away*. Moses took the far look. **The recompense of reward.** Perhaps the Messianic age, as in 10: 35, at least the ultimate triumph of God's own.

27. **He forsook Egypt.** While this is generally understood to refer to Moses' flight from Egypt, the reference is more probably to the Exodus, in which he was the principal actor, and from which fear of the king did not deter him. **Not fearing.** Moses' flight from Egypt after killing the Egyptian was due to his fear of Pharaoh, Ex. 2: 14, 15. At the Exodus, on the other hand, Moses withstood Pharaoh to his face, and showed the utmost courage. **Endured.** Or, *was steadfast*. Especially appropriate as characterizing Moses' resolute behavior in his dealings with Pharaoh in connection with the Exodus. **As seeing.** Among Old Testament heroes Moses alone was said to have beheld God, Ex. 33: 11; Num. 12: 8. Before the Exodus, at Horeb, the angel of the Lord had appeared to Moses, and awakened his faith, Ex. 3: 2. This firm hold on the invisible world was thus conspicuously characteristic of Moses. **Him who is invisible.** Cf. 11: 1. The heroic achievements of Moses were all reflections of this inward vision of faith.

28. The holding of the first Passover, with the striking of the blood upon the doorposts, was an expression of faith in God's promise of deliverance. Cf. Ex. 12. **The destroyer.** The same word is used as in Ex. 12: 23, LXX.

29. The perilous march through the Red Sea, undertaken at Je-

- land: °which the Egyptians °assaying to do °were
 30. swallowed up. By faith the walls of Jericho fell
 down, after they had been compassed about for seven
 31. days. By faith Rahab the harlot °perished not with
 them that were disobedient, having received the spies
 32. with peace. And what shall I more say? for the time
 will fail me if I tell of °Gideon, Barak, Samson, °Jeph-
 33. thah; of °David and Samuel and the prophets: who
 through faith °subdued kingdoms, °wrought righteous-
 ness, °obtained promises, °stopped the mouths of lions,

Jehovah's command, Ex. 14:15, 16, showed the people's faith in the promise. **Which . . . assaying to do.** Lit., *making trial of which*, i.e., of the dry land. **Were swallowed up.** Ex. 14:28. The fate of the Egyptians showed the danger which the Hebrews had in their faith faced and surmounted.

30. The obedience rendered by Joshua and the people to the divine command to compass Jericho in solemn procession once each day for seven days, evinced their faith that God would by these means deliver the city to them. Josh. 6:1-20.

31. Rahab's acknowledgment of the reality of the Hebrews' claims and prospects showed her faith in Jehovah, and her estimate of the unseen world. **Perished not.** Josh. 6:17, 23, 25.

The workings of faith in judges, prophets, and saints of later times, 11:32-40.

32. The writer cannot hope to finish the list of those whose heroic achievements, wrought through the sustaining power of faith in the unseen, have been recorded in scripture. **Gideon . . . Jephthah.** Heroes of the times of the judges. For Gideon cf. Jud. chh. 6-8; Barak, chh. 4, 5; Samson, chh. 13-16; Jephthah, chh. 11, 12. **David and Samuel and the prophets.** The great figures of the royal period. The names are not put in the Old Testament order.

33. In a brilliant series of nine clauses, the writer summarizes the achievements of judges, kings, and prophets. **Subdued kingdoms.** Intended especially of the judges. **Wrought righteousness.** The work of Samuel is perhaps especially thought of (1 Sam. 12), although the prophets, and indeed the whole work of Israel, might be so interpreted. **Obtained promises.** Had promises made to them. The expression does not mean that they had experienced the fulfilment of them, at least as yet. David is probably meant, 2 Sam. 7:12-16. **Stopped the mouths of lions.** Referring not so much to

34. °quenched the power of fire, °escaped the edge of the sword, °from weakness were made strong, °waxed mighty in war, °turned to flight armies of aliens.
35. °Women received their dead by a resurrection: and others were °¹tortured, °not accepting °²their deliverance; that they might obtain °a °better resurrection:
36. and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea,
37. moreover of °bonds and imprisonment: °they were

¹ Or, *beaten to death* ² Gr. *the redemption*.

the exploits of Samson and David (Jud. 14:6; 1 Sam. 17:34), as to the experience of Daniel, Dan. 6:16-23.

34. **Quenched the power of fire.** As Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the fiery furnace, Dan. 3:27. **Escaped the edge of the sword.** As did Elijah, 1 Kgs. 19:1, 2, and others less conspicuous. **From weakness were made strong.** This suggests Samson, Jud. 16:28, but is perhaps rather to be connected with the gradual development of the pious Maccabæans from utter weakness and insignificance into strength and independence. This is favored by the following clauses, which seem to have especial reference to the Maccabæan struggle. **Waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens.** That the stirring events of the Maccabæan times are meant is established by the last phrase, *armies of aliens*, the words of which are not usual ones, but are frequent in 1 Macc. in just the senses exhibited here.

35. **Women received their dead.** As in 1 Kgs. 17:23; 2 Kgs. 4:36, 37. **Tortured.** The reference is to 2 Macc. 6:19, 28, where a similar word is used. **Not accepting their deliverance.** Again referring to 2 Macc. 6:22, 30. **A better resurrection.** Probably suggested by 2 Macc. 7:9, 14, the story of the seven martyrs and their mother. Their endurance of agony and death, in the expectation of resurrection thereafter, evinced their faith in the unseen world. **Better.** Than the restoration to earthly life mentioned earlier in the verse.

36. While it is not necessary to limit the reference of these words too closely (cf. Jer. 20:2), they are certainly appropriate to the martyrs just mentioned, in whose story mocking and scourging had a place, 2 Macc. 7:1, 7, 10. **Bonds and imprisonment.** Probably referring to the prophets: Micaiah, 1 Kgs. 22:27; Jeremiah, Jer. 20:2; 37:15, 16; 38:6.

37. **They were stoned.** Referring probably to Zechariah, 2 Chron.

- stoned, they were °sawn asunder, they °were tempted, they were °slain with the sword: °they went about °in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, 38. ¹evil entreated (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and 39. the holes of the earth. And these all, °having had °witness borne to them °through their faith, °received 40. not the promise, God having ²provided some better

¹ SV *ill-treated* ² Or, *foreseen*

24: 20, 21. Cf. Lk. 11: 51. **Sawn asunder.** The fate of Isaiah, according to Justin Martyr, *Dialogue*, c. 120; Tertullian, *Scorpiace*, c. 8; *On Patience*, c. 14; Origen, *To Africanus*, c. 9; and the *Ascension of Isaiah*, c. 5. **Were tempted.** If this be the true reading, as the best Mss. indicate, the reference must be to the trying of men by torture, to prevail upon them to apostatize, as, e.g., in the persecutions of the Maccabæan time. **Slain with the sword.** The fate of Uriah the prophet, Jer. 26: 23, and of Elijah's fellow-prophets, 1 Kgs. 19: 10. **They went about.** Being driven, that is, from one hiding place to another. **In sheepskins.** The same word is used in the LXX, of Elijah's mantle, 1 Kgs. 19: 19. Cf. Zech. 13: 4. In this and the previous clause, Elijah and Elisha are probably before the writer's mind, cf. 1 Kgs. 19: 2, 3; 2 Kgs. 2: 13; 6: 13, 31, as well as the faithful of the Maccabæan times, 1 Macc. 2: 28, 31; 9: 33, 42, etc.

38. The contrast is between the worth of these men and their experiences, and we may read, *Men of whom the world was not worthy wandering in deserts and mountains*, etc. Such were the experiences of Elijah, Elisha, the Maccabæan heroes, and others, who in the face of every calamity and hardship, through faith kept their hold upon the unseen realities. The relative clause belongs with the following, not the preceding, phrase.

39. **Having had.** Better, *though they had*. **Witness borne to them.** In the scriptures. **Through their faith.** While their faith is in most cases not specifically mentioned in the Old Testament, they are commended, and for things that, as the writer has shown, necessarily involved faith, and thus they may be said to have had witness borne to them through their faith. **Received not the promise.** The Messianic promises, conceived as a whole.

40. From the disappointment of these men of old, the writer skillfully derives encouragement for his readers. Not only is the noble

thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

2. *Exhortation to follow their example, or rather that of Christ, accepting the tasks and trials of life as the Father's discipline,*

12: 1-13

12. °Therefore let us also, °seeing we are compassed about with so great °a cloud of witnesses, °lay aside ¹every weight, °and the sin which ²doth so easily beset us, and °let us run with ³patience
2. the race that is set before us, °looking °unto Jesus

¹ Or, *all cumbrance* SVm *all encumbrance* ² Or, *doth closely cling to us* Or, *is admired of many* ³ SVm *steadfastness*

example of these worthies, in their hard discipline of faith unrewarded, to arouse the readers to steadfastness in faith, but the very postponement of fulfilment which they had to endure is shown to involve especial encouragement for the believers in Christ, who are destined speedily to share with them the glories of the Messianic day. The fulfilment of the promise has been postponed to the "last days" in which the Christians live. Thus while all had the faith and all ultimately receive the promise, the Christians are more fortunate in that they have both faith and that in which all believed, *i.e.*, Christ and the Messianic revelation.

Jesus the great example, 12: 1-4.

1. **Therefore.** The writer proceeds now to make practical use of the thought developed in ch. 11. **Seeing we are compassed about with.** Or, *Since we have encompassing us.* **A cloud of witnesses.** The figure is drawn from the runners in the stadium. The veterans of faith look down upon the race that is run by their successors. Having been borne witness to by God, they here become witnesses to the value of faith. **Lay aside every weight.** Stripping off everything that encumbers the athlete. **And the sin which doth . . . beset us.** Better, *And close clinging sin.* **Let us run . . . the race.** The Christian life is described as a race by Paul, 1 Cor. 9: 24, etc. **Patience.** Better, *endurance.*

2. **Looking.** Better, *Looking away.* **Unto Jesus.** The heroes

- °the ¹author and perfecter of *our* faith, who °for the joy that was set before him endured °the cross, °despising shame, and hath °sat down at the right hand
3. of the throne of God. For °consider him that hath °endured such gainsaying of sinners against ²themselves, that ye °wax not weary, fainting in your souls.
4. Ye have not yet °resisted unto blood, °striving against

Ps. 110 : 1

Num. 16 : 38

¹ Or, *captain* ² SV and many authorities, some ancient, read *himself*.

of old are not the believer's models, for in Christ he has a better pattern. Christ alone has completely won the victory of faith. The Christian runner must fix his eyes upon Jesus. **The author and perfecter of our faith.** Better, *the leader and perfecter of faith.* Jesus was the leader in the way of faith, and in him faith found its perfection. The insertion of *our* distorts the meaning. The following clause explains Jesus' perfection in faith and leadership. **For the joy.** Rather, *instead of the joy.* Jesus chose to endure a cross, instead of the experience of joy properly his. Before us lies a conflict to be gone through with; before him lay an existence of joy. He turned from it to endure a cross. It is this that exalts him to leadership in the life of faith, in which he alone has attained perfection. **The cross.** Better, *a cross.* **Despising shame.** The disgrace of the crucifixion, as of hanging to-day, made the thought of Christ's death doubly repugnant and difficult for early believers. **Sat down.** He has taken his seat at God's right hand. Cf. Ps. 110 : 1; Heb. 1 : 3, 13; 8 : 1; 10 : 12.

3. **Consider him.** The readers are asked to think upon Christ and the steadfast endurance displayed by him, in his most trying experience. **Endured such gainsaying of sinners against themselves.** Better, *endured such gainsaying at the hands of sinners against themselves.* Though it was to their interest to hear and obey him, they in their hopeless inconsistency and self-contradiction, rejected him, and thus refused their own good and sinned against themselves. The expression *sinners against themselves* recalls Num. 16 : 38. **Wax not weary.** The steadfastness of Jesus should inspire them to endure their lighter sufferings.

4. The readers have not as yet been called upon to endure what Christ endured. **Resisted unto blood.** Reached the limit of hardship in their struggle. **Striving against sin.** Suggests primarily the inner conflict, but is doubtless meant to convey the thought of outward trial and persecution as well. Their steadfastness must be equal to martyrdom itself, if need be.

5. sin: and °ye have forgotten °the exhortation, which reasoneth with you as with sons,

PROV. 3:11,
12

My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord,

Nor faint when thou art reproved of him;

6. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,
And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7. ¹It is °for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you °as with sons; for what son is there whom
8. *his* father chasteneth not? But if ye are without chastening, whereof °all have been made partakers,
9. then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of ²spirits, °and live?

¹ Or, Endure unto chastening

² Or, our spirits

The discipline of suffering, 12: 5-13.

5. The discipline to be secured through trial must not be forgotten. **Ye have forgotten.** Although by no means in the last extremity of trial, the readers are in danger of apostasy or apathy at the least, and this shows that they are forgetful of the fundamental moral significance of trial. **The exhortation.** Prov. 3:11, 12. The scripture is appealed to for warning against giving way under trial.

6. The discipline of hardship is but another evidence of God's fatherly interest and training. The emphasis is upon "loveth" and "son." Cf. vss. 7-10.

7. **For chastening.** The trying experiences of the readers are disciplinary, and so to be accepted and even welcomed, as proofs of God's acceptance of them as his sons. **As with sons.** The discipline of trial is to be expected by sons of God.

8. True sonship to God cannot be thought of apart from such discipline. Those who are exempt from the experience of it are no sons of God. **All have been made partakers.** All true sons of God, as stated in the scripture, vs. 6.

9. The *a fortiori* argument. Sons of God may surely be supposed to accept from him at least such paternal discipline as they respect-

10. For they ¹verily for a few days chastened *us* as seemed good to them; but he for *our* profit, that *we* may be
11. partakers of his holiness. All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous, but grievous: yet afterward it yieldeth ^opeaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, *even* ^o*the fruit* of righteousness.
12. Wherefore ²lift up the hands that hang
13. down, and the palsied knees; and ^omake straight paths for your feet, that ^othat which is lame ^obe not ³turned out of the way, but rather be healed.

Isa. 35 : 3
Prov. 4 : 26,
LXX

¹ SV *indeed* ² Gr. *make straight*. ³ Or, *put out of joint*

fully accept from often arbitrary earthly fathers. **And live.** The lofty reward of this higher sonship, worthily sustained, should reconcile all to its trying demands.

10. Far above the arbitrary discipline of earthly fathers stands the divine training, wholly beneficent in motive and effect, and lifting men into participation in God's own goodness.

11. The trying situation of the readers is reflected in this continued treatment of the significance of chastening in God's discipline of men. **Peaceable.** Or, *peaceful*. In contrast with the stress of the time of discipline, the fruits of the experience are peaceful, perhaps with further reference to peace with men and God. **The fruit of righteousness.** The discipline filially endured produces, in those who have been trained by it, righteousness. The words recall Jas. 3: 17, 18.

12. An exhortation, in language suggesting the march through the desert, and drawn from Isa. 35 : 3, to mutual helpfulness and renewed endeavor.

13. **Make straight paths.** Keep the path that leads straight on, and do not turn to right or left, as you march through the desert. **That which is lame.** Or, *the limb that is lame*. **Be not turned out of the way.** Better, *Be not put out of joint*, as it will be, if left neglected, by the further march. The discouraged and fainting in the congregation must be saved from apathy and apostasy by the watchcare and help of their brethren.

3. *Warning against moral failure, with its inexorable penalty*, 12 : 14-17

Ps. 34 : 14

14. °Follow after peace with all men, and the °sanctification without which no man shall °see the Lord:

Deut. 29 : 18
LXX

15. looking carefully ¹lest *there be* any man that ²falleth short of the grace of God; lest °any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby the many be

Gen. 25 : 33

16. defiled; ¹lest *there be* any °fornicator, or profane person, as °Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his
17. own birthright. For ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected (for he °found no place ³of repentance), though °he sought it diligently with tears.

¹ Or, *whether* ² Or, *falleth back from* ³ SV for a change of mind in his father

14. **Follow after peace.** The injunction of Ps. 34 : 14. The writer seeks to insure the unity and solidarity of the church. The believers are to be helpful, vs. 13, and harmonious. Cf. Rom. 12 : 18. **Sanctification.** Hallowing, growth toward holiness. Cf. in vs. 11, *that peaceful fruit, righteousness*. See the Lord. As in Matt. 5 : 8.

15. They are to guard each other from relapse into unbelief. **Falleth short of the grace of God.** Through apostasy. **Any root of bitterness.** One apostate in the church might prove a poisonous root, productive later of baneful fruit, in the defilement of the mass of the community. The figure is drawn from Deut. 29 : 18.

16. The writer cannot too often insist that they must take care that not one of their number be recreant. **Fornicator.** Perhaps in the literal sense, but more probably in the figurative sense of one who violates the divine covenant, since that interpretation carries the thought forward without interruption. **Esau.** As representative of those who hold spiritual things cheap, and lightly exchange heavenly prospects and divine promises for immediate material advantage. The practical value of this lesson for the readers, under stress of persecution and in danger of apostasy, would be very great.

17. The case of Esau shows the fatal and irrevocable consequences of such undervaluing of spiritual things. Cf. Gen. 27 : 38. **Found no place of repentance.** Cf. Wisd. 12 : 10. The deed could not be

4. *Final contrast of the old revelation, in its material and repellent aspects, with the new, heavenly, ideal, and eternal, 12 : 18-29*

18. For ye are not come unto ¹*a mount* that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and unto ²*black-*
 19. *ness*, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* ³*they* that heard ⁴*intreated* that no word more should be
 20. spoken unto them: for they could not endure ⁵*that* which was enjoined, If even a beast touch the mountain,
 21. it shall be stoned; ⁶*and so fearful* was the appearance,
 22. *that* Moses said, ⁷*I exceedingly fear and quake*: but

Deut. 4 : 11,
12

Ex. 19 : 16

Deut. 5 : 23,
25

Ex. 19 : 12,
13

Deut. 9 : 19

¹ Or, *a palpable and kindled fire* ² SV *entreated*

undone. It is not implied that Esau remained unforgiven by God, only that his loss of his inheritance and the accompanying promise was irrevocable. **He sought it.** *I.e.*, the blessing. The admonition closes with the awful warning afforded by Esau, against the forfeiture of heavenly prospects for material gratification.

The making of the old covenant, with its dreadful attendants, 12 : 18-21.

18. **A mount that might be touched and that burned with fire.** Better, *a palpable and kindled fire*. The material and fear-inspiring elements in the old revelation are emphasized. **Blackness, and darkness, etc.** The language of Deut. 4 : 11; 5 : 22; Ex. 19 : 16, 19.

19. The terrors of the theophany were unendurable to the Hebrews. **They that heard intreated.** Deut. 5 : 25.

20. **That which was enjoined.** Ex. 19 : 12, 13.

21. **And so fearful was the appearance that Moses said.** Better, *And, — so fearful was the appearance, — Moses said.* **I exceedingly fear.** The words of Moses on another occasion, Deut. 9 : 19, are here connected with the giving of the law. The thought of the whole is to set forth the terrible material manifestations attending the establishment of the first covenant.

The new covenant, in its heavenly glory and attractiveness, 12 : 22-24.

22. The attendants of the new covenant are neither material nor

- °ye are come unto °mount Zion, and unto °the city of the living God, °the heavenly Jerusalem, ¹and
 23. to ²innumerable hosts of angels, to °the general assembly and church of the °firstborn who are °enrolled in heaven, and °to God the Judge of all, and to the
 24. spirits of °just men made perfect, and to Jesus the °mediator of a new ³covenant, and to °the blood of

¹ Or, *and to innumerable hosts, the general assembly of angels, and the church, etc.*

² Gr. *myriads of angels* ³ Or, *testament*

repellent. **Ye are come.** Christian believers have approached and are in the presence of the noblest heavenly realities. **Mount Zion.** The site of the sanctuary in Jerusalem is here used in the sense of God's heavenly dwelling place. Instead of Mount Sinai, with its convulsive and portentous tokens of his presence, we approach his very abode in heaven. **The city of the living God.** As in 11:10, 16; 13:14. **The heavenly Jerusalem.** Cf. Gal. 4:26; Rev. 21:2.

23. **The general assembly.** Better, *a festal assembly*. **First-born.** Whether this is to be understood of the angels, or of believers in Christ, it is very difficult to decide. If of the angels, the translation is, *To innumerable hosts of angels, a festal assembly and congregation of firstborn ones, who are enrolled in heaven.* On the whole, it is more probably to be understood of Christian believers enrolled as citizens in this abiding city, and sharing with their brother and forerunner the honors of firstborn sons. In these brilliantly rhetorical passages, carefully graduated analysis must not be demanded of the writer, as 11:32, e.g., shows. **Enrolled.** I.e., as citizens. Cf. Phil. 3:20. The promise of a city, 11:16, must mean citizenship in it; but we do not find the angels described as citizens of the heavenly city, unless it be in this passage. **To God the Judge of all.** Or, *to a judge, the God of all.* The reference is not to an apocalyptic judgment day to come, but to present realities; among which must be recognized a judge, who is the God of all. **Just men made perfect.** There seems to be no sufficient reason for limiting this to the righteous men of the old dispensation. Jesus has completed their justification and made them perfect, 10:14. To him the writer now passes.

24. In the reference to Jesus and his sacrifice the description reaches its climax. **Mediator.** As in 8:6; 9:15. As the description of the old covenant ended with a reference to its mediator, Moses, so now that of the new. **The blood of sprinkling.** Suggesting the

- sprinkling that speaketh better ⁰¹than *that of* Abel.
25. See that ye refuse not ⁰him that speaketh. For if they escaped not, ⁰when they refused him that warned *them* ⁰on earth, ⁰much more *shall not* we escape, ⁰who turn away from him ⁰²that *warneth* from heaven:
26. ⁰whose voice then shook the earth: but now ⁰he hath promised, saying, Yet once more will I make to tremble Hag. 2 : 6
27. not the earth only, but also the heaven. And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may

¹ Or, *than* Abel

² Or, *that is from* heaven

manner of Jesus' mediation, and his significance as priest and sacrifice for men. **Than that of Abel.** Abel shed his blood, a first martyr, as it were, of faith, and a kind of type of Jesus' sacrifice. Not through his blood, however, were even the men of old made perfect, but through the blood of Christ, so much more eloquent.

Warning and encouragement, 12 : 25-29.

25. **Him that speaketh.** God. **When they refused . . . on earth.** Better, *When on earth they refused him that gave instruction, or revelation. Moses is meant.* **On earth.** The scene of the giving of the old covenant. **Much more.** The *a fortiori* argument again. **Who turn away from him.** Or, *who reject him.* **That warneth from heaven.** Better, *that is from heaven.* The reference seems to be to Christ, from the contrast with Moses, but the following clause makes it probable that by *him that is from heaven* God is meant. It was a fatal thing to refuse Moses. How much more so to reject God.

26. The old revelation shook the earth, but the new shakes heaven as well. **Whose voice then shook the earth.** Ex. 19 : 18, Heb.; cf. Jud. 5 : 4, 5. **He hath promised.** Hag. 2 : 6. Haggai's prophecy of the future glory of the temple is rearranged so as to emphasize the shaking of the heaven, by which the writer understands the Messianic catastrophe impending.

27. Since the prophet says *once, i.e., once only*, this new shaking is to be final. Only that which is in its nature unshakable can survive it. It will therefore involve the removal of the created, visible, and material, and leave the ideal, essential universe to abide forever.

28. remain. °Wherefore, °receiving °a kingdom °that cannot be shaken, °let us have ¹grace, °whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with °reverence
29. and awe: for our God is a consuming fire.

Deut. 4:24

¹ Or, thankfulness ² Or, godly fear

28. **Wherefore.** Since this catastrophe is at hand, and God has given us a part in his eternal world. **Receiving.** Or, *as receiving*, since we are to receive. **A kingdom.** Cf. Dan. 7:18. **That cannot be shaken.** Since it is not created but partakes of God's own eternal nature. **Let us have grace.** Better, *Let us be thankful*, give thanks. **Whereby we may offer service.** Better, *and thereby offer service*; let us through our thankfulness minister to God.

29. This solemn thought, with which the writer concludes his powerful exhortation based on the comparison of the two revelations, is drawn from Deut. 4:24.

VI. GENERAL EXHORTATIONS, PERSONAL MATTERS, 13:4
AND FAREWELL, 13:1-25

13. Let °love of the brethren continue. Forget not to shew °love unto strangers: for thereby some have
3. °entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are °in bonds, °as bound with them; them that are °evil entreated, as being °yourselves also in the body.
4. *Let marriage be had in honour °among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God*

* SV *ill-treated*

Exhortations to brotherly love, hospitality, helpfulness, purity, 13:1-4.

1. **Love of the brethren.** Already exercised among them, as shown by their ministry to the saints, 6:10.

2. **Love unto strangers.** Or simply *hospitality*. Especially needful in a great central capital like Rome, to which Christians were constantly coming or being brought. For no other city in the Roman world would this exhortation have been so appropriate and significant. Yet in time of persecution this duty of hospitality would be attended with no little peril. **Entertained angels unawares.** As did Abraham and Lot, Gen. 18, 19. Hospitality, the entertainment of brethren of their own or distant congregations, often brings with it unexpected blessing.

3. **In bonds.** A hint of persecution. A few years before Paul had been a prisoner in Rome, and a few years after, Ignatius was so. Timothy has just been released from imprisonment elsewhere, vs. 23. **As bound with them.** Especially fitting if the prisoners are suffering for their faith. **Evil entreated.** Perhaps those oppressed by persecution. **Yourselves also in the body.** And hence liable to similar calamity.

4. Chastity is enjoined. **Among all.** Marriage is to be respected by the parties to it and by all others as well. Others translate *in all things*.

Deut. 31 : 6,
8; Josh 1 : 5

Ps. 118 : 6

5. will judge. ^{o1} Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for ^ohimself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any
6. wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say, ^oThe Lord is my helper; I will not fear:
What shall man do unto me?
7. Remember them that had the rule over you, ²which spake unto you ^othe word of God; and considering
8. ^othe issue of their ³life, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and ⁴for
9. ever. Be not carried away by divers and strange teachings: for it is good ^othat the heart be stablished ^oby grace; not by ^omeats, wherein they that ⁵occupied

¹ Gr. Let your turn of mind be free. ² SV men that ³ Gr. manner of life.
⁴ Gr. unto the ages. ⁵ Gr. walked.

Warnings against covetousness, discontent, and anxiety, 13 : 5, 6.

5. Covetousness is forbidden. **Be ye free.** Lit., let your character, disposition, be free. On the liberality of the readers and their former losses, cf. 6 : 10; 10 : 34. Instead of covetousness, the readers are to practice contentment and trust in God. **Himself hath said.** Words found in Deut. 31 : 6, 8 LXX, but in the third person, *He will in no wise fail thee* etc. The precise form of the text is found in Philo, *On the Confusion of Tongues*, ch. 33. This teaching of serene reliance upon God recalls the teaching of Jesus, Mt. 6 : 25-34.

6. **The Lord is my helper.** The quotation is from Ps. 118 : 6 LXX. *The example and teaching of their first teachers must not be forgotten, 13 : 7, 8.*

7. Those who first taught the readers Christian faith are no more. Cf. 2 : 3; 4 : 2. **The word of God.** Of the first Christian preaching, as in Acts 4 : 31; 13 : 46. **The issue of their life.** Perhaps their martyrdom, at any rate their dying in faith. This lifelong faith is worthy of all imitation.

False teaching and practices to be avoided, 13 : 9-12.

9. In the changelessness of Jesus, in whom the first gospel preachers had had their faith, is good ground for abiding steadfast in their teachings, instead of taking up with new ones. A lapse into Judaism would not of course be thus expressed. **That the heart be stablished.** Or, *to be stablished in heart.* The thought is of stability,

10. themselves ^owere not profited. We have an altar, whereof ^othey have no right to eat ¹which serve the
11. tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood **Lev. 16: 27** is brought into the holy place ²by the high priest *as an*
12. *offering* for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people

¹ SV *that* ² Gr. *through*.

steadfastness, in contrast with fickleness and fondness for innovation. **By grace.** Only thus is this stability to be secured. **Meats.** The reference is probably not to the clean and unclean foods of Judaism, still less to Jewish sacrificial meats, which must have come to an end with the destruction of the temple. The connection shows that the matter is one capable of forming the subject of divers and strange teachings. We are probably to understand some form of Judaistic Christianity, given to external observance, perhaps of an ascetic character (cf. the Ebionites), which might naturally be set forth concretely by the one word *meats*. Such external and formal practices cannot establish the heart, and, as the writer goes on to show, have no place in the Christian service. **Were not profited.** Or, *have not profited*.

10. The Christian sacrifice is not, like the Jewish, eaten by the priests, but, like the sin-offerings of the Day of Atonement, is carried forth without the camp. The language of the verse is allegorical, not only in part but throughout. **They . . . which serve the tabernacle.** Sometimes understood to mean the Jewish priests, but more probably referring to Christian believers, who are elsewhere in the letter spoken of as ministering as priests, 9 : 14; 12 : 28, with the same word as that used here. The Christian service provides no sacrificial meats. The Christian priest has no right to eat of the Christian sacrifice, which, like that of the Day of Atonement, is carried outside the camp.

11. The analogue found in the Old Testament for the sacrifice of Jesus is the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement offered by the high priest once a year. The bodies of the victims were not eaten even by the priests, as other sacrifices might be, but were burned without the camp.

12. So the great solitary offering of himself made by Jesus took place without the gate, and supplies to his brother priests no sacrificial meats. The Christian priests, unlike those of old, do not partake of their sacrifice. The parallel cannot, of course, be pressed; Jesus was not burned without the camp, as were the Day of Atonement

Ps. 50 : 14
 Lev. 7 : 12
 Isa. 57 : 19

- through his own blood, suffered ^owithout the gate.
 13. ^oLet us therefore go forth unto him without the camp,
 14. ^obearing his reproach. For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after *the city* which is to come.
 15. ^oThrough him ¹then let us offer up ^oa sacrifice of praise to God ^ocontinually, that is, ^othe fruit of

* Some ancient authorities omit *then*.

victims, nor did they suffer without the camp, as he did without the gate. As those victims were the preëminent sin-offering of Judaism, so *Jesus . . . suffered . . . that he might sanctify the people through his own blood*. The reference is again to Jesus as the final and eternally sufficient sin-offering, who has entered, with his own blood, into the Most Holy place of the celestial sanctuary, there to make full atonement for the people. **Without the gate.** Cf. John 19 : 17, where it appears that Jesus suffered without the city.

The reproach of Jesus is not to be refused, 13 : 13, 14.

13. The thought of Jesus' humiliation and death suggests a practical though allegorically expressed admonition. **Let us go forth unto him without the camp.** The Christian believers are to renounce the world with its attachments, as really and fully as if they were to go forth out of it. **Bearing his reproach.** The humiliation which he endured they must not refuse in their measure to share. The readers, in the midst of their experience of persecution, would know but too well the meaning and the truth of this.

14. Not in this world is the Christian's ideal home to be realized. Like Abraham, he is a stranger and a pilgrim, looking forward to a promised land, and an enduring city. Cf. 11 : 10, 16; 12 : 22; the heavenly Jerusalem, Rev. 21 : 2.

Thankfulness and beneficence, 13 : 15-17.

15. From the thought of meats offered to idols and pagan sacrifices, the writer turns to the offerings the Christian may offer. **Through him.** Jesus is now thought of, not as the sacrifice, but as the ministering high priest, through whom the believer-priests make offering to God. **A sacrifice of praise.** Words taken from Lev. 7 : 12 LXX. In superficial, but not real, conflict with the writer's teaching as to the finality of Jesus' offering of himself. There is yet, he would say, if you must have offerings, a suitable one; *the offering of praise*. The thought is in close connection with that of the ministry of thanksgiving, 12 : 28. **Continually.** The occasional offering of the old covenant, the offering of praise, is to be the believer's continual offering. Cf. Lev. 7 : 12 LXX. **The fruit of lips.** Words drawn

16. lips which make confession °to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such
17. sacrifices God is well pleased. Obey °them that have the rule over you, and submit *to them*: for °they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; °that they may do this with joy, and not with ¹grief: for °this *were* unprofitable for you.
18. Pray for us: °for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring to live ²honestly in all

¹ Gr. *groaning*. ² SV *honorably*

from Hos. 14 : 3 LXX. **To his name.** *I.e.*, to God. This grateful acknowledgment to God is to be the Christian priests' offering of praise.

16. There are other sacrifices, that may still be made, sacrifices that have primarily to do with one's fellow-men, but are none the less offerings made to God, and acceptable to him. Christian service has a man-ward as well as a God-ward side. Practical beneficence and generous helpfulness are not to be forgotten. Cf. 13 : 1, 2; 6 : 10.

17. Loyalty and obedience to the leaders of the church, as those charged with responsibility for the brethren, is enjoined. **Them that have the rule over you.** Better, *your leaders*. The officers of the congregation are probably meant. Cf. vs. 7, where former leaders are mentioned. **They watch.** Suggesting the watchfulness of a shepherd or a sentinel. This responsible and arduous service should call forth a ready response in obedience and devotion. **That they may do this with joy, and not with grief.** Better, *groaning*. Do not thwart their efforts and make their burdens still heavier by disobedience. **This were unprofitable.** Disobedience and wilfulness will not only disappoint their efforts, but bring disaster upon you as well.

Personal words, benediction, and salutations, 13 : 18-25.

18. From the leaders of the church the writer passes to himself and those with him, who seem to be separated from the readers through no wish of their own, but perhaps by reason of the persecution now threatening, if not actually afflicting, the church. **For we are persuaded.** Or, *For we believe*. The writer can honestly ask their prayers, since he has lived in all good conscience. If there is an apologetic hint in these words, it may suggest that the writer

19. things. And I exhort *you* the more exceedingly to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.
- Isa. 63 : 11 20. Now ^othe God of peace, ^owho brought again ^ofrom the dead ^othe great shepherd of the sheep ^{o1}with the blood of ^{o2}the eternal covenant, *even* our Lord Jesus,
- Zech. 9 : 11
Isa. 55 : 3 21. ^omake you perfect in every good ³thing to do his will, ^oworking in ⁴us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; ^oto whom *be* the glory ⁵for ever and ever. Amen.

¹ Or, *by* Gr. *in*. ² SV *an* ³ Many ancient authorities read *work*. ⁴ Many ancient authorities read *you*. ⁵ Gr. *unto the ages of the ages*.

has incurred criticism by withdrawing from the scene of danger, as Cyprian, *e.g.*, afterwards did in the Decian persecution. On the other hand, he may have been in exile or imprisonment for some time past. Certainly he is now free, for he declares his intention of coming to them with Timothy, *if he come soon*. Perhaps he as well as Timothy has just been set at liberty, cf. vs. 23.

19. Some obstacles, at all events, still keep the writer from the readers, and these he hopes by their prayers may be speedily removed, so that he may rejoin them.

20. From his request for the readers' prayers for himself, the writer turns to his own devout wish for them, somewhat in the manner of Paul, 1 Thes. 5:23; 2 Thes. 3:16. **The God of peace.** As in 1 Thes. 5:23; Rom. 15:33; 16:20; Phil. 4:9, etc. **Who brought again.** Or, *who brought up*. The language is largely drawn from Isa. 63:11 LXX. **From the dead.** While a reference to the resurrection is unmistakable here, the further allusion to *the blood of an everlasting covenant* suggests one of the great themes of the epistle, the entrance of Jesus into the eternal sanctuary with his blood, there to effect the final atonement. It is this that is emphasized. **The . . . shepherd of the sheep.** A Messianic designation, cf. John 10:11, 14; 21:16; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4 (the arch-shepherd). Not simply *the shepherd of the sheep*, of Isa. 63:11 LXX, but the *great shepherd*. **With the blood of the eternal covenant.** Cf. Zech. 9:11. The reference is to Jesus' priestly ministry, for which God brought him up to the eternal sanctuary, his presence. **The eternal covenant.** Better, *An eternal covenant*. The new, better, final covenant of 8:6, etc.

21. **Make you perfect.** Or, *fit you*. To be connected with *to do his will*. **Working in us.** The thought is that God will so

22. But I exhort you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation: for I have written unto you in few words.
23. Know ye that our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.
24. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. ^{o1}They of Italy salute you.
25. Grace be with you all. Amen.

¹ SVM *The brethren from, etc.*

fit them to do his will, *by working in us, through Jesus Christ, his good pleasure. To whom be the glory.* That is, *to the God of peace.* Cf. 1 Pet. 5:11.

22. The writer seems to anticipate some possible impatience with his message on the part of the readers. The passages of stern rebuke may have recurred to his mind. The brevity of the letter, he seems to say, must excuse its abruptness or any other defect.

23. The writer is in a position to know more of the circumstances of Timothy than are the readers. Tradition connects Timothy's later activity with Ephesus, and it was in that region and at Rome particularly that believers were at this time persecuted. Save for these precarious hints, suggesting Asia as the possible scene of Timothy's imprisonment and release, nothing can be said of them. Doubtless it was as a Christian that he had suffered. That the writer should speak thus of Timothy to a Jewish Christian congregation seems hardly appropriate or probable. The mention of him serves rather to connect the writer with the followers of Paul and with his congregations. Timothy is expected by the writer, who proposes to proceed with him to the readers, *i.e.*, to Rome. The writer thus seems to be at some point by way of which Timothy would naturally journey to Rome, or from which at least Rome is more readily accessible than it is from the point at which Timothy finds himself. That the writer is outside of Italy is probable from the following verse.

24. Salutations are sent to the leaders and to the members of the congregation. **They of Italy.** Lit., *They from Italy*, suggesting that Italian brethren absent from Italy are meant, who are taking this opportunity to send salutations to their brethren at home, from whom they are separated perhaps by the same stress of persecution which has driven the writer from Rome.

25. The same concise parting salutation occurs in Tit. 3:15. Paul's letters usually exhibit a somewhat longer form, 1 Cor. 16:23; Gal. 6:18.

NOTE

Melchizedek in Philo

Philo understands Melchizedek to represent that right reason which guides and cheers the aspiring mind, giving it, instead of water, wine that possesses it "with a divine intoxication, more sober than sobriety itself." His priesthood is the priesthood of reason, which has as its inheritance the true God. Philo thus completely spiritualizes and allegorizes Melchizedek, as he does Abraham, whom he understands to represent the soul emigrating ("Hebrew") from the realm of the passions. The writer to the Hebrews, on the other hand, while he does find significance in the meaning of Salem, and makes use of the silence of scripture, treats Melchizedek and Abraham in a much more historical spirit, not allegorizing them, but setting Melchizedek forth, altogether in the manner of Ps. 110, as a type of non-Aaronic priesthood, underived and unlimited. Here, as often, the epistle has interesting points of resemblance to Philo, but exhibits, upon examination, still deeper differences, in spirit, method, and detail. Cf. Philo, *On the Allegories of the Sacred Laws*, chh. 25, 26; *On Abraham*, ch. 40.

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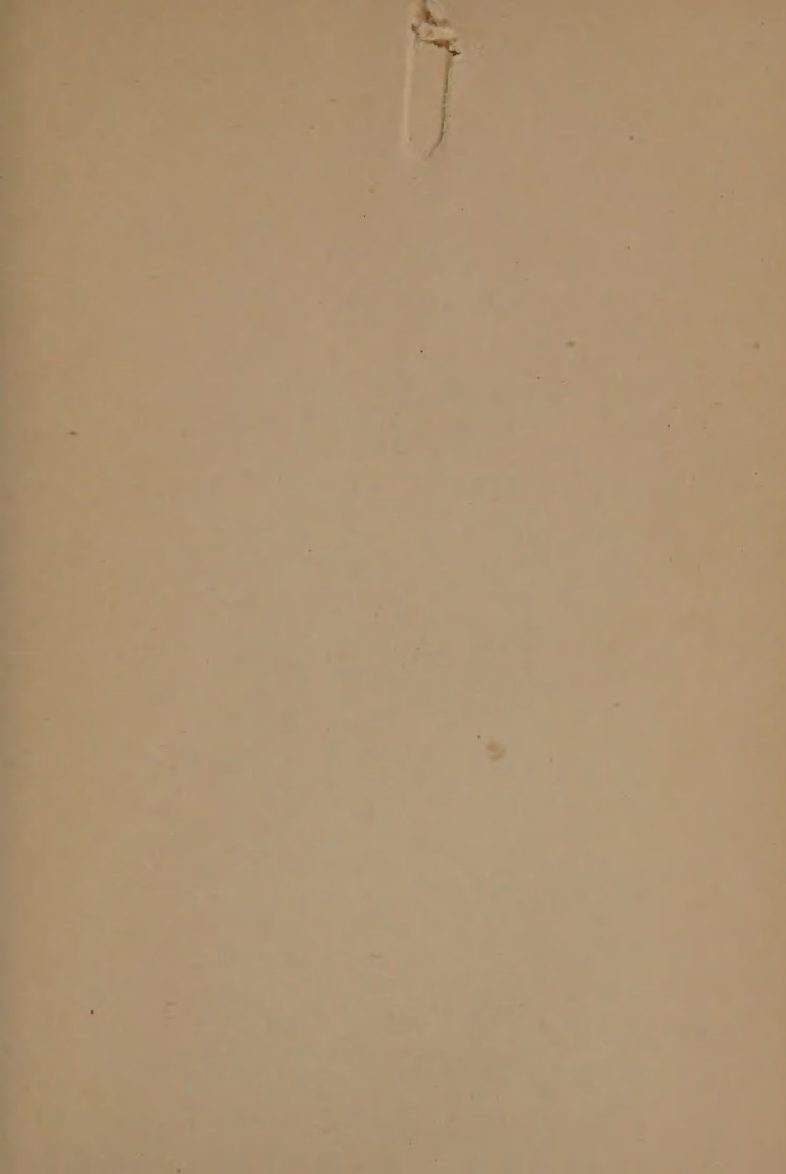
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